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**BOSTON ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY  
COMMUNITY PLANNING**

**COMPREHENSIVE  
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT  
BOSTON**

**JANUARY 2003**

**Submitted to the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative and  
the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services by**

**Navin Associates**

## Comprehensive Community Assessment of Boston

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## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***Terminology***

The term Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) used throughout this report is intended to include both English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and basic skills for adults and out-of-school young adults (16 and older). Basic skills include basic literacy through adult secondary education and transition skills needed for post-secondary education. Adult Basic Education (ABE) is, at times, used synonymously with AEL.

### ***Introduction***

Fourteen neighborhood-based coalitions throughout Boston reviewed existing AEL-related data and conducted original research into the AEL-related needs and assets of their neighborhoods. Each coalition then produced a report summarizing its findings, conclusions, and implications for AEL service planning. These reports, plus citywide secondary data and four citywide surveys of AEL programs, provided the basis for this community assessment of AEL-related needs and assets in Boston. This report follows the Massachusetts Department of Education's Guidelines for Writing a Comprehensive Assessment of a Community's Needs and Assets as they relate to Adult Basic Education, Family Literacy, and Workforce Development.

### ***1) DATE OF REPORT AND PERIOD OF ASSESSMENT***

This report, which includes fourteen neighborhood-specific sub-reports, was written between July 2002 and January 2003. The secondary data for this report was gathered between November 2001 and November 2002. The majority of the primary data for this report was collected between April 2002 and November 2002.

### ***2) SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS***

A review of the primary and secondary data pointed to a critical need for more Adult Education and Literacy services of all kinds with specific regard to the following key findings:

There are not enough AEL services to meet the demand. More classes of all kinds are needed at all times, especially on weekends and in the evenings.

- There are approximately 6500 slots in AEL programs across the city.
- A majority of AEL programs report maintaining waitlists. Approximately 60% of people on wait lists have to wait up to 6 months but some students wait up to two years for a placement.
- More classes are needed in the afternoons, evenings and on weekends to accommodate busy schedules, which are particularly inflexible for low-wage workers.

Boston is a city with a rapidly growing immigrant and minority population. A third of Boston residents speak a language other than English in the home. In 2000, more than one in four Bostonians were foreign born, up from one in five in 1990. Almost half of all foreign-born came from Latin America; a quarter were Asian-born. Latino residents have increased in all but three neighborhoods and Asians in all but one. Among the immigrant populations there is unmet need for both ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and basic native language and English literacy skills.

Many Bostonians lack the credentials to succeed in the “new economy”. One in five Bostonians over 25 does not have a high school diploma and, of these, many left school without completing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. There is unmet need for credentialing programs among this population.

Although the number of adults without a diploma decreased significantly from 1990 to 2000, one in five Bostonians still do not have a diploma.

Many Bostonians lack the skills to succeed in the “new economy” despite having credentials. A recent study by MassINC. found that 35% of individuals statewide lack the credentials to succeed in the new economy. There is a significant need for workers to improve and/or obtain new skills despite their credentials. Further education and training would help these individuals achieve better career advancement.

Economic conditions pose serious challenges to many Bostonians. Credentialing, ESOL instruction and further education would help Bostonians cope with the following challenging circumstances.

- The Boston consolidated metropolitan statistical area (CMSA) has the highest consumer price index among major U.S. CMSAs for “All items”, which includes food, housing, apparel, transportation, medical care, entertainment, and fuel and other utilities.
- There was an increase in poverty from 1990 to 2000 in Boston, even while the unemployment rate fell during the same period.

Many individuals need more support to overcome interrelated personal issues, which get in the way of student success (money, family responsibilities, transportation, child care, native language literacy, day-to-day life demands). Coordinated support services would benefit individuals who are challenged by their complex circumstances.

More coordination and collaboration is needed to improve AEL services according to adult learners, potential students, day care parents, employers, literacy providers, human service providers, and other stakeholders surveyed for this report.

- Better coordinated and more strategic outreach and marketing would more widely inform potential students, service providers, and employers about available services.

- Stronger collaborations and linkages between the business community, AEL providers, and community resources could bolster and maximize existing limited resources.
- Coordination and collaboration among AEL providers would facilitate the improvement of AEL services (more funding and more resources).

AEL services need to be expanded to include more course offerings generally and more bridge classes specifically. In addition to the general need for more ESOL and ABE classes, there appears to be unmet demand for courses in pre-literacy, financial literacy, and native language literacy. Also, there is an unmet demand among ESOL students for one or more transitional steps between straight ESOL instruction (i.e., instruction in reading, writing and speaking English) and all-English instruction in traditional courses (e.g., math, history, etc.).

One of every five persons in Boston AEL programs lives outside of Boston, according to AEL providers surveyed for this report.

The ultimate impact on the AEL system of using the MCAS as a mandatory graduation requirement is as yet unknown, but AEL providers anticipate that it will increase demand for credentialing services and affect class composition.

### **3) CONCLUSIONS FOR TARGET POPULATION**

People who cannot speak English and individuals who lack basic reading and writing skills share many AEL-related needs that are likely to impede their future economic stability, if unaddressed.

Immigrant populations have a diverse set of ABE and ESOL-related needs that vary depending on skill/educational level upon arrival, cultural and linguistic similarities to dominant U.S. culture, and customs related to gender and learning.

Residents of public housing in many neighborhoods in the city are in need of AEL services and, yet, are particularly difficult to recruit into AEL programs according to providers of AEL services.

- Interrelated issues of poverty and a low educational attainment for many residents of public housing are significant obstacles to entering and advancing in the work force.
- Given the significant gains that could be made by residents of public housing through utilizing AEL services, more effective recruitment and better support of the students is indicated.

Low-income, single mothers need additional support to overcome a myriad of AEL-related needs (with transportation and child care being the most concrete and easily identifiable) in order to succeed in AEL pursuits.

Younger adult learners (under 25 years old) introduce new challenges into the classroom as their presence in the classroom increases, requiring creative management of conflicting agendas between more mature and less mature learners.

Family literacy initiatives are needed to address the specific AEL-related needs of families that may have intergenerational literacy-related needs.

Low wage workers need stronger supports to facilitate class enrollment and attendance and to help with persistence and retention.

- Tailored class schedules and tutoring are needed to complement the work schedules of workers in particular industrial groups, e.g., hotel workers, janitors, food service workers, and hospital workers.
- Advocacy with Boston employers is needed to help them understand the potential benefits of facilitating employee access to AEL services.

Homeless individuals have particularly complex needs for an array of comprehensive services, including AEL services.

People without sufficient skills to succeed in this increasingly knowledge-based economy have many AEL-related needs, regardless of whether they have a credential.

The number of actual and potential AEL students in Mattapan, and its relatively removed location, justify siting AEL classes in that neighborhood. Mattapan has the eighth highest enrollment in AEL classes by zip code within the city, but there are no DOE-funded classes there.

#### **4) GAPS BETWEEN NEEDED SERVICES AND AVAILABLE ASSETS**

More classes of all kinds are needed throughout the city.

- Demand for ABE and ESOL classes significantly exceeds slots at all levels across the city. Nearly every program and every class in the city maintain long waitlists.
- More “bridge” or transitional services from ESOL to ABE are needed.
- More course offerings are in demand (computer skills training, citizenship classes, job readiness/training, native language literacy classes).

There are significant gaps in AEL schedules across the city.

- More classes are needed at all times, in the afternoons and evenings and on the weekends.



Affordable and safe child care is in short supply.

- Parents cannot attend classes when there are gaps in child care coverage.

A wide range of basic and coordinated support services (tutoring, translation, self-esteem building, and case management), necessary for many students to succeed, is inadequate to meet the need.

There are particular gaps in support services for immigrants related to issues of citizenship and immigration, connecting to mainstream society, managing day-to-day needs, and translation.

## **5) *BARRIERS/CHALLENGES TO ENROLLMENT AND PERSISTENCE IN EDUCATION***

Barriers to Student Participation:

- Long wait lists
- Competing class/work schedules: Many prospective and current students, already overstretched by the inflexible demands of work and family responsibilities, find it difficult to sustain attendance. Not enough classes are offered when students might be able to attend (weekends, afternoons, evenings).
- Unavailability of safe and affordable child care, especially for mothers of children under 5
- Transportation, a general difficulty, is compounded when work, home, and class are all in different parts of the city.
- Learning disabilities: Diagnosed and undiagnosed learning disabilities pose a significant barrier to success.
- Insufficient information available about AEL services: Very little marketing and outreach is done to raise awareness about the availability of AEL services, so many individuals, employers and agencies are unaware that they exist. (One dilemma about doing more outreach is that waiting lists are already long.)
- Health issues (including physical and mental health and substance abuse) present significant barriers to participating in and completing AEL classes.
- Homelessness and related conditions pose significant barriers to participating in and completing in AEL classes.

- Stigma of illiteracy: Some potential students are deterred from enrolling in class because of the stigma associated with being perceived as illiterate.
- Poverty: Poverty and the effects of poverty present a significant barrier to participating in AEL services.

Systemic Barriers and Challenges:

- A lack of resources prevents the AEL system from sufficiently responding to need.
- Systemic barriers to long-term success of adult education students are 1) the state/federal emphasis on “Work First” and short-term training, and 2) the Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund’s lack of support for long-term ESOL & ABE for incumbent workers.
- Systemic funder-related barriers such as varied reporting requirements and uncoordinated funding cycles hinder program planning and interagency collaboration.
- Service delivery guidelines and restrictions from funders inhibit tailoring classes to the particular needs of students.

Insufficient Program Resources:

- AEL programs are, in general, under funded. This impacts the quality of the programs (lack of materials, sub-optimal learning conditions, teacher turnover, and lack of infrastructure/support to run high quality programs). These conditions can act as a barrier to successful participation in programs.

Lack of workplace education:

- Relatively few employers consider employees’ involvement in adult education classes as something to support. Boston employers appear to be less likely than employers in other parts of the state to offer AEL services to their employees.

## **6) HIGHLIGHTS OF IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE PLANNING**

The economic and educational profile of many Bostonians indicates an even greater need for AEL services than the current excess demand portrays.

The growing gap between the wealthy and the poor will continue to grow if the complex skills necessary to advance in the “new economy” are not made more available to the under-educated and under-trained.

The rapidly growing number of immigrants has already had a profound impact on AEL services and will continue to be a significant factor in future AEL planning.

Strategic planning of services should not be based solely on the assumption that where people live is the major determinant of where they receive AEL services, except perhaps in geographically isolated neighborhoods such as East Boston and Charlestown.

Inherent limitations in the collection of census tract data can mislead AEL program planners. Census tract data should inform, but not dictate, AEL program planning.

Increased numbers of offenders being released should lead to coordination (e.g., referrals) between AEL services in correctional institutions and those in the neighborhoods to which the ex-offenders return.

A stronger financial base is needed to address the gaps in AEL services.

- Survey available funding resource assets identified in this report to determine current and foreseeable funding levels.
- Work with employers and unions to increase awareness and resources.
- Advocate for and identify new public revenue streams.
- Community resources need to be leveraged through collaboration and partnerships with other groups and agencies (including use of space).

A more integrated network of support services and AEL services might help to address the complex needs of many AEL students.

Further investigation of the reasons programs do not use supported distance learning methods to reach wait list students would be helpful in learning about barriers in this area.

Workplace AEL services might alleviate the burden of some learners juggling multiple responsibilities.

Future planning and improving of AEL services would be better facilitated by more consistent and regular collection of a minimal set of data across all programs - - DOE and non-DOE funded alike, e.g., types and levels of classes offered and capacity and vacancy in these classes.

AEL providers must take into account changes in education and workforce development that are likely to impact program planning. Some examples of changes include the Unz Initiative, changes in high school graduation requirements, deficits in state and federal budgets, and the trend toward outcome assessment among private sector funders.

One challenge to AEL community planning is the lack of an exhaustive list of AEL programs or slots. This community planning process provided most of that information but, so far, it is not possible to know about every faith-based or employer sponsored class. Continued outreach is important.

**The following is a list of suggestions for local AEL coalitions regarding next steps in community planning as a result of the community assessment process:**

- Begin with reflection on a difficult job well done and what the community assessment process revealed about the strengths and weaknesses of AEL-related assumptions, beliefs and practices.
- Present and share the results of the comprehensive citywide and neighborhood reports with stakeholders, keeping the broader context of inter-neighborhood similarities in mind.
- Start the strategic planning process as soon as possible using the comprehensive assessment to guide the process.
- Expand coalition membership to include more non-AEL members (e.g., businesses, unions, press and legislators) and ensure all AEL providers are involved. Find "common" language and innovative ways of looking of addressing the challenges. Be open to "new ways" of compromise and presenting services, e.g. swapping for resources or space, etc. Keep the urgent need to provide resources to the clients/students a priority.
- Look for and take advantage of opportunities to present and share "best or emerging practices."

## **7) COMMUNITY PARTNERS WHO HAVE SIGNED OFF ON THE REPORT**

This assessment report is primarily a summary of the work conducted by fourteen neighborhood coalitions of AEL providers and other stakeholders that include, but are not limited to, many community-based organizations that provide health care, social services, child care, as well as the Boston Public Library, Roxbury Community College, Bunker Hill Community College, employers, civic organizations, Adult Literacy Resource Institute, Adult Literacy Initiative, subsidized housing providers, police, career centers, and Boston Public Schools. The fourteen coalitions are listed below. After that are found the signatures of representatives of each of these coalitions all of which contributed to, reviewed, and endorsed this assessment report.

**Allston-Brighton Adult Education Coalition**

**Charlestown Collaborative**

**Chinatown Community Educational Partnership**

**Dorchester Adult Literacy Coalition**

**Downtown Initiative for Adult Literacy**

**East Boston Healthy Boston Coalition**

**Fenway / Kenmore Community Partnership**

**Hyde Park Adult Literacy Planning Group**

**Jamaica Plain / Egelston Square Education Network**

**North End Adult Literacy Coalition**

**Roslindale Adult Literacy Community Planning Group**

**Roxbury Adult Literacy Coalition**

**South Boston Adult Literacy and Education Coalition**

**South End Adult Education Coalition**





## **B. INTRODUCTION**

### ***The Partners and Their Roles***

This community assessment report is based primarily upon data provided by roughly two dozen Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) service providers and the fourteen neighborhood-based AEL coalitions that they created throughout Boston, in response to Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) contractual requirements regarding community planning. At periodic meetings of these providers, collectively constituted as the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative (ALI), major decisions were made about the process for developing the community assessment, results were discussed, and drafts of this report were reviewed.

The ALI providers pooled about one-third of their community planning funds, in order to contract with a consulting firm, Navin Associates, to assist with the assessment process. They also established the Community Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC), which was comprised of three DOE-funded AEL providers who represented the ALI, as well as representatives of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute (a DOE-funded training and technical assistance resource), the DOE (the funding agency), and the Education and Planning departments of the Office of Jobs and Community Services within the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation of Boston (the fiscal conduit between DOE and the ALI providers).

The CPAC developed a scope of services that included: coordinating the community assessment process; conducting citywide research; providing training, technical assistance and neighborhood-specific secondary data to local coalitions (including 2000 Census material); and writing this report. CPAC selected Navin Associates to carry out the scope. Navin Associates received monthly guidance and direction in meetings with CPAC.

### ***The Process***

Navin Associates provided training to the coalitions on conducting original research and analyzing original and secondary data. The fourteen coalitions reviewed existing AEL-related secondary data and conducted their own original research into the AEL-related needs and assets within their neighborhoods. Altogether, this original research consisted of approximately sixty focus groups, ten local community surveys, and nine key informant interviews. The coalitions then produced individual reports (attached), which were reviewed and summarized by Navin Associates. Working with the CPAC, Navin Associates also conducted four citywide surveys of AEL programs. Thus, this report is based on the fourteen local reports, four citywide surveys, and citywide secondary data.

### ***The Report***

This report follows DOE's Guidelines for Writing a Comprehensive Assessment of a Community's Needs and Assets as they relate to Adult Basic Education, Family Literacy, and Workforce Development. It presents a citywide overview of AEL assets and needs;



neighborhood-specific information is found in the attached reports by local coalitions. Some of the limitations of this report include the following.

- The DOE Guidelines were aimed at the average municipality in Massachusetts with a population of tens of thousands or less. In contrast, each of Boston's fifteen neighborhoods has tens (or hundreds) of thousands of residents with incredible diversity in language, culture, and socio-economic characteristics, as well as many social service providers, employers, schools, etc. Thus, Boston's size and the need to collect and analyze data at two levels (locally and citywide) necessitated some adaptation of the DOE Guidelines to fit the situation.
- There are not individual coalition reports for Mattapan, Beacon Hill, and Back Bay because there were not DOE-funded providers in those areas to establish community planning coalitions. Citywide secondary data used for this report included those areas, and original data about current students included residents of Mattapan who are AEL students in other neighborhoods
- While the citywide portion of this report hopefully captures the big picture well, important but not widely reported issues receive little or no attention, because a summary report such as this tends to overlook findings that are not frequently reported (e.g.: the need for services for adults with learning disabilities; the barriers confronting adult learners who do not have homes; the needs of particular immigrant or refugee groups). Much more detailed information can be found in the neighborhood-specific reports that accompany this report.
- There was limited participation in this assessment process by employers or unions and none by corrections institutions, despite the existence of AEL programs in each of those settings and despite outreach to them.
- This report does not include a uniform, citywide survey of potential or current AEL students. The four citywide surveys conducted for this report targeted AEL providers. However, all local coalitions did conduct local research into the needs of actual and/or potential adult learners, the results of which are reported here.
- While enormous time and energy went into assessing AEL-related actual and potential needs and actual AEL-related assets, somewhat less may have been spent assessing *potential* AEL-related assets, due to the challenge it presented and insufficient resources to do so.
- Funds for research, data analysis and writing were limited at both the local and citywide levels.
  - Local AEL staff, already overloaded with administrative and instructional duties, had to add a "comprehensive assessment" process to their responsibilities. This was very difficult for all providers, and especially difficult in smaller neighborhoods where there was only one provider that had to do all of the work that was able to be shared by two to six providers in larger neighborhoods.

- Navin Associates had to tabulate neighborhood-specific 2000 Census data by individual census tract, because the 2000 Census had just been released and had not yet tabulated by census tract. This painstaking process consumed far more of the budget than anticipated, leaving less for other needs.
- Budget constraints limited research by neighborhood coalitions. For example, the Downtown Initiative for Adult Literacy conducted focus groups with Downtown fast food employees whose native language was not English. However, there were insufficient resources to conduct focus groups with hospital workers, hotel workers, and janitors – all of whom have pressing AEL needs and differing work schedules.
- Budget constraints limited follow-up by Navin Associates regarding citywide surveys of AEL providers. For example, the results of a survey of available ESOL and ABE slot capacity would have been more precise, if Navin Associates had been able to ask follow-up questions in order to clarify how some providers categorized and reported certain classes.

## C. BOSTON PROFILE AND NEEDS

### 1) *FOCUSING ON BOSTON*

#### a) **Description**

According to the City of Boston website, Boston prides itself on being one of the most livable cities in America. Twenty diverse neighborhoods offer more than 600,000 residents the opportunity to taste, touch and experience things from all over the world. Neighbors benefit from exceptional medical facilities, vibrant neighborhood business districts, and a solid network of parks, community centers, and libraries. Former US President Clinton has called Boston a nationwide model in crime prevention, and Boston's schools continue to grow stronger each year.<sup>1</sup>

#### b) **Boundaries**

Boston is a diverse modern city of neighborhoods covering 43.18 square miles with approximately 780 miles of public roads.<sup>2</sup> From the North End to Bay Village, Back Bay to the South End, Jamaica Plain to Charlestown, the city shows its diversity of populations, of languages, of foods and philosophies. Immigrants from every corner of globe have settled in Boston with memories and customs that enrich the community. Boston is located in eastern Massachusetts, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the east; Cambridge, Somerville, Everett, Chelsea, Watertown, and Revere on the north; Brookline, Newton, and Needham on the west; Dedham on the southwest; and Canton, Milton, and Quincy on the south. Boston is 106 miles south of Portland, Maine; 44 miles northeast of Providence, Rhode Island; 93 miles northeast of Hartford, Connecticut; and 218 miles northeast of New York City.<sup>3</sup> Boston makes up most of Suffolk County, which also includes Chelsea, Everett and Revere.

**FIGURE 1**

Boston at a glance:<sup>4</sup>

#### **Socioeconomic**

County	Suffolk
Kind of Community	Urbanized Center
School Structure	K – 12
Form of Government	Mayor – Council
2000 Population	589,141

<sup>1</sup> City of Boston, [www.cityofboston.gov/residents/default.asp](http://www.cityofboston.gov/residents/default.asp) Residents, 3-8-02

<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts Municipal Association, City/Town Demographic Information

<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development <http://www.mass.gov/portal/index.jsp>, Community Profiles, "Boston – Suffolk County",

<sup>4</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts, <http://dorapps.dor.state.ma.us/ataglance/home/communitylist.asp> "At a glance report for BOSTON – (As of 1/3/02)".

2001 Labor Force	304,722
1989 Per Capita Income	15,581
Population Per Square Mile	13,488
2001 Unemployment Rate	4.6
Moody's Bond Rating (as of 4/5/01)	Aa3

**FY2001 Cherry Sheet Estimated State Aid**

Education Aid	272,086,249
General Government	278,117,768
Total Receipts	550,204,017
Total Assessments	65,754,182
Net State Aid	486,449,835

**FY 2001 Tax Classification**

Tax Classification	Tax Rate	Tax Levy	Assessed Value
Residential	10.58	276,115,340	29,227,208,073
Industrial	30.17	19,110,908	633,440,771
Personal Property	30.17	81,345,185	2,696,227,560
Total		917,749,943	50,494,513,454

**FY 2001 Revenue Sources**

Revenue Sources		Percent of Total
Tax Levy	917,749,943	51.4%
State Aid	550,204,017	30.8%
Local Receipts	284, 898,289	15.9%
Other Available	33,677,093	1.9%

**FY Schedule A – Actual Revenues and Expenditures**

	General Fund	Special Revenue	Capital Projects	Trust Revenue	Total All Funds
Revenues	1,244,665,157	274,005,357	4,663,387	2,590,167	1,535,924,068
Expenditure	1,421,152,384	264,611,463	173,143,251	1,825,222	1,860,732,320
Police	173,634,338				173,634,338
Fire	111,653,588				111,653,588
Education	503,527,756	74,813,137	55,577,952		633,918,845
Public Works	61,483,355	7,146,986	19,220,017		87,850,358
All Other	570,853,347	182,651,340	98,345,282	1,825,222	853,675,

## 2) WHO LIVES IN BOSTON?

### a) Size and Racial/Ethnic Make-up of Population

The city of Boston is a medium size city inhabited by 589,141 adults and youth.<sup>5</sup> Slightly more than half of the residents are people of color (51%), with the remaining 49% being White. Blacks make up 24% of the total population followed by Hispanics at 14% and Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islanders at 8%. (see **FIGURE 2**)

Approximately 80% of the city's population is composed of adults 18 years of age and older. Of the 20% of the population that is under 18 living in Boston, far more are Minority than White. Three-quarters of all youth are Minority. The composition of adult Bostonians differs significantly with just more than half (55%) being White.

Birth rates in Boston vary considerably by race with births among Blacks and Hispanics outpacing all other groups. Births among Blacks and Hispanics average 8 percentage points higher than their respective representations in the total population. Among Whites, births average nearly 14 percentage points lower than their representation in the total population. Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islanders (API) give birth at rates just slightly lower (by 0.7 percentage points) than their representation in the total population.<sup>6</sup> (See Boston Citywide Secondary Data Report in the **Appendices**)

Of the total births in Boston in 1999, 9.7% (775) were to teen mothers under the age of 20. An analysis of teen births by ethnicity compared to total births by ethnicity shows significant variation by ethnicity. The rate of teen births is highest for young Hispanic women with nearly one in five births (19.8%) being to teen mothers. Blacks have the next highest teen birth rate with 12.3% of all births to Blacks being to teen mothers. Non-Hispanic APIs have the lowest teen birth rate at 5.2% with Whites slightly higher at 6.9%.<sup>7</sup>

### b) Education and Childcare

#### Boston Public Schools Population

Three-quarters of the 82,400 eligible school-age children living in Boston are enrolled in the Boston Public Schools (BPS). The BPS student body is 85% Minority. Nearly half of all students (48%) are Black, slightly more than a quarter (28%) are Hispanic, 15% are White and 9% are Asian. Of the students who do not attend BPS, nearly half (47%) are White and 40% are Black. (see **FIGURE 3**)

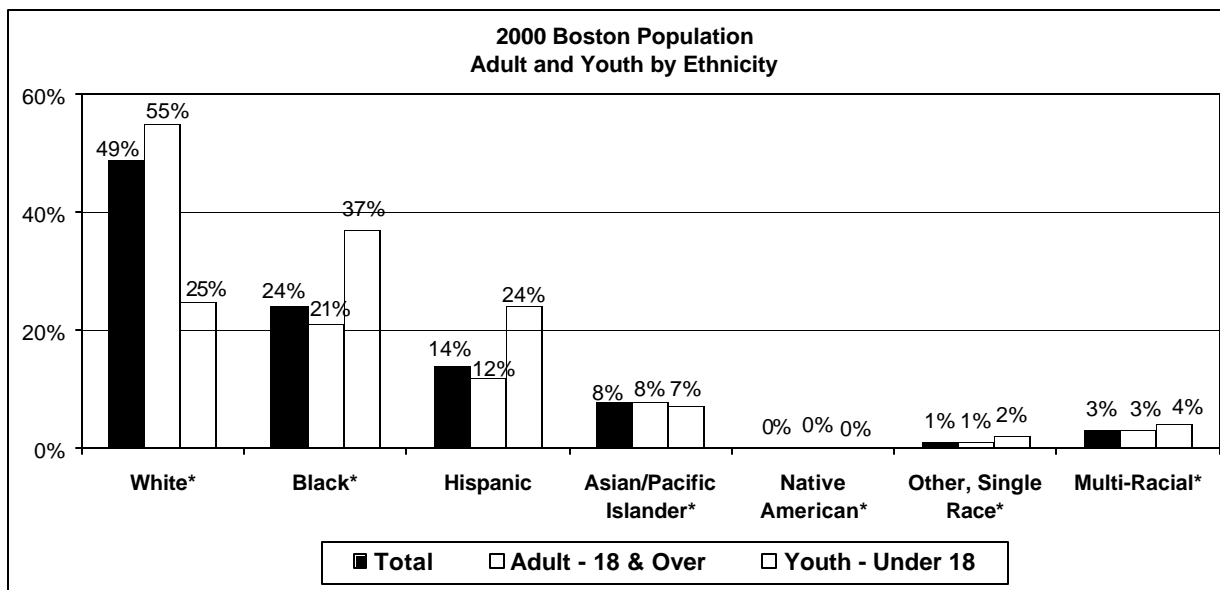
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<sup>5</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts, <http://dorapps.dor.state.ma.us/ataglace/home/communitylist.asp> "At a glance report for BOSTON – (As of 1/3/02)"

<sup>6</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Mass CHIP Perinatal Report for Boston, 12/27/01

<sup>7</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Mass CHIP Perinatal Report for Boston, 12/27/01

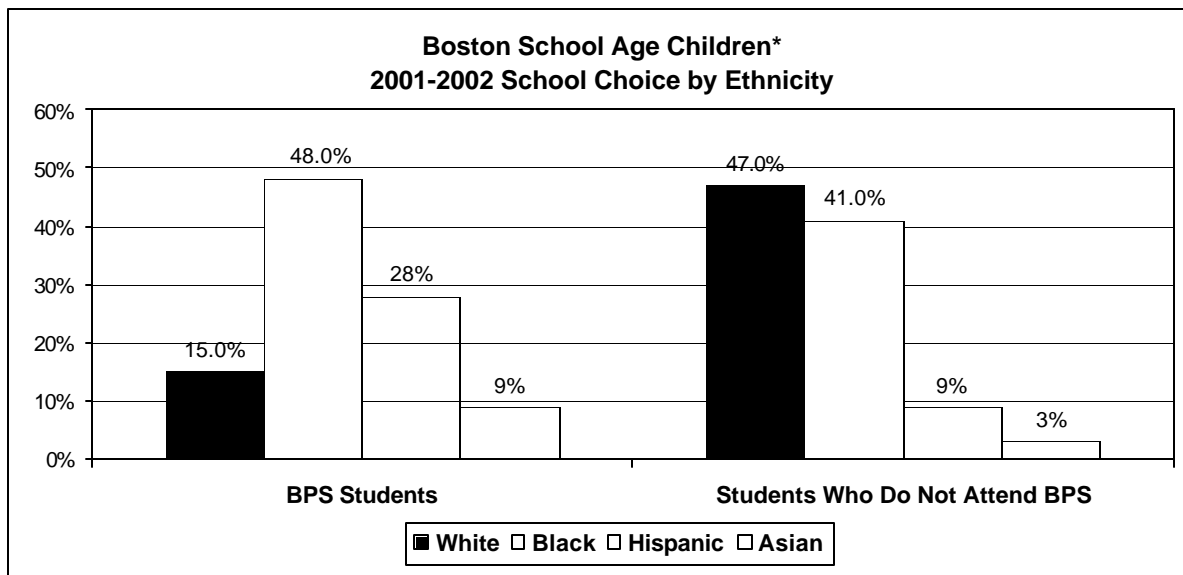
**FIGURE 2**



\*Non-Hispanic

Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority, Boston's Population – 2000, The Youth and Adult Population by Race and Ethnicity in Boston and Boston's Neighborhoods for the year 2000 (PL 94-171 Initial Release)

**FIGURE 3**



\*Based on an estimated 82,400 school age children living in Boston.

Source: Boston Public Schools, Focus on Children, Facts and Figures – Student Achievement, <http://boston.k12.ma.us/bps/bpsglance.asp>

### *Boston Public Schools and MCAS*

In the late 1990s, the BPS began implementing the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), a mandatory statewide assessment test, in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and History/Social Sciences. Students at various grade levels are tested annually. According to a November 7, 2002 article in the Boston Globe, 1,600 of 3,700 Boston seniors (43%) have not passed all of the elements of the MCAS required for graduation. Students who do not pass the test after three attempts receive a certificate in place of a diploma. Since its inception, the MCAS has been surrounded by controversy. Opponents of the test argue that: the tool is culturally biased; it fails to accurately gauge the mastery level of the student; it penalizes students for inadequacies in the curriculum by withholding a diploma; and schools are obliged to “teach to the test”. Proponents of the test maintain that it will raise minimum standards in the schools, benefiting the students as well as society. One generally agreed upon problem with the interpretation of the results is that all students are included in the results regardless of whether they have special needs, a first language other than English, or refused to take the test, often pulling school scores downward. Despite the controversy surrounding the use of MCAS as a high stakes graduation requirement, the results are worth examining for comparisons over time and among schools regarding student academic achievement.

A significant portion of BPS students taking the MCAS in 2001 received warning or failing grades in each of the subject areas. In general, the higher the grade tested, the lower were the results. In Mathematics, warning or failing grades were received by 42-55% of the students, with results varying by grade. Students did better in the English Language Arts portion of the MCAS, receiving warning or failing grades 21-40% of the time. Sixty-eight percent of eighth grade students taking the MCAS in History/Social Sciences received a warning grade. Students in the city of Boston performed considerably lower in all categories than did students statewide.<sup>8</sup>

### *Educational Attainment in Boston*

According to 2000 Census data, almost 80% of Boston residents 25 years and older have attained at least a high school diploma. More significantly, more than one in five Bostonians (21%) did not complete high school. This group was comprised of two subgroups: those who attended some high school but did not graduate (12%) and those who dropped out prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade (9%).

Boston mothers over the age of 18 years who gave birth in 1999 were somewhat more educated, with 85% of the mothers attaining at least a high school diploma and nearly 30% graduating from college. Nonetheless, almost 15% of these mothers did not attain a high school diploma compared to 8% statewide.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education, 2000 and 2001 MCAS District Results and Spring Summary MCAS Tests: Summary of State Results.

<sup>9</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Mass CHIP Perinatal Report for Boston 12/27/01.

### BPS Bilingual Programs

In 2000, 60% of students enrolled in a BPS bilingual language program were enrolled in the Spanish Bilingual Program. Other programs included Haitian (11%), Chinese (8.4%), Cape Verdean (7.3), Vietnamese (5.0%), Portuguese (3.4%), Somali (1.6%), and other programs (4.2%).

### Child Care

According to the Boston Public Health Commission birth records from 1996-1999 and estimated 2000 birth figures, there were 37,295 children under five years of age living in the city of Boston. There were approximately 17,600 licensed slots in Family Child Care and Center-based Care for infants, toddlers and preschool aged children. Approximately 3,889 children were on waitlists for openings in licensed settings.<sup>10</sup>

### **c) Income and Poverty**

While Boston's labor force statistics and unemployment rates are fairly comparable to statewide figures, income of Bostonians is generally lower than residents statewide. This contrasts sharply with the fact that Boston had the highest Consumer Price Index among all major U.S. consolidated metropolitan statistical areas in 2001.<sup>11</sup> There were 306,082 people in the labor force in Boston or roughly 63.5% of the city's population. With 16,650 unemployed individuals, the unemployment rate was 5.4% as of June 2002, just slightly higher than statewide by 0.6 percentage points.<sup>12</sup> In 2000, Per Capita Income was \$23,353 and median household income was \$39,629.<sup>13</sup>

One method for measuring poverty is the Family Self-Sufficiency Standard. It "...calculates how much money working adults need to meet their family's basic needs for housing, child care, food transportation, health care and taxes."<sup>14</sup> It differs from the U.S. Bureau of the Census measure of poverty by using a methodology that incorporates such factors as; additional costs associated with working; regional differences in costs of living; and family composition and size. **FIGURE 4** shows the minimum income necessary to meet basic needs for several different types of household configurations living in Boston in 1997.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Massachusetts Office of ChildCare Services, Boston Public Health Commission, Action for Boston Community Development Head Start Program, Boston EQUIP, March 2002

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States:2001* Washington, DC, 2001, Table #693

<sup>12</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training, MassStats, Local Area Labor Statistics.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & Massachusetts.

<sup>14</sup> The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Massachusetts, Wider Opportunities for Women, Inc., September 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid



**FIGURE 4**

<b>The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Various Family Configurations in Boston</b>				
	<b>One Adult</b>	<b>One Adult, One Preschooler</b>	<b>One Adult, One Preschooler, One School Age</b>	<b>Two Adult, One Preschooler, One School Age</b>
Self-sufficiency Wage – Hourly	\$7.52	\$15.28	\$18.54	\$10.08
Self-sufficiency Wage – Monthly	\$1324.21	\$2,689.93	\$3,263.06	\$3,546.53
Self-sufficiency Wage – Yearly	\$15,890.52	\$32,279.16	\$39,156.72	\$42,558.36

Source: The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Massachusetts, Wider Opportunities for Women, Inc., September 1998.

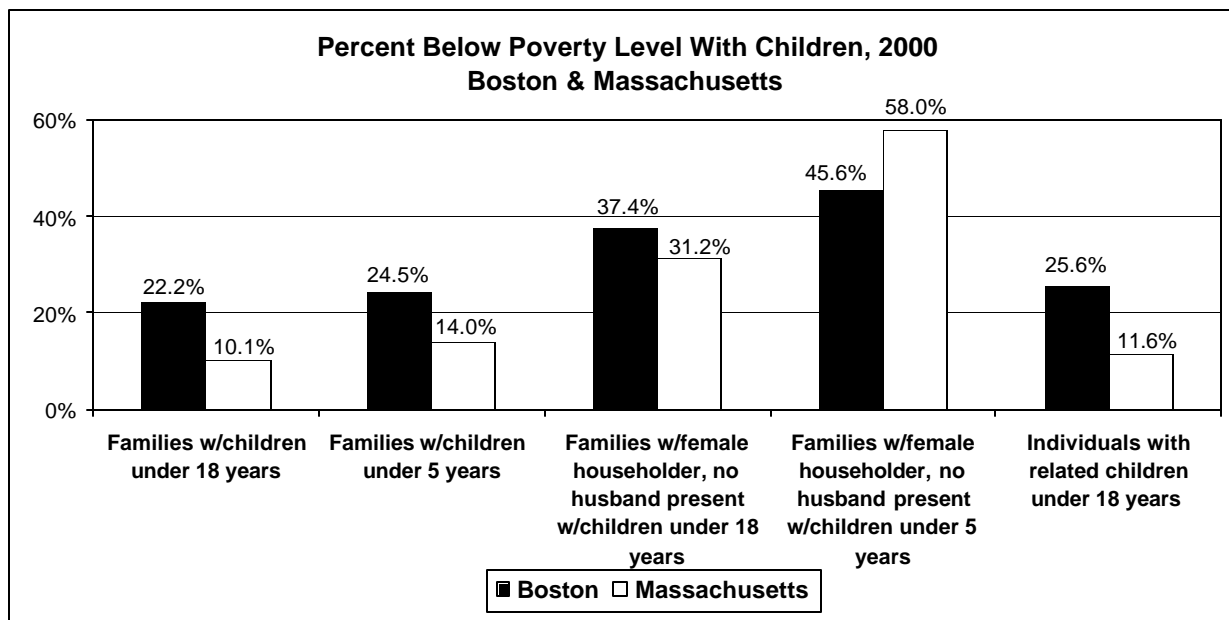
There are significant numbers of Bostonians living in poverty and living on low to moderate incomes. Nearly one in five individuals (19.5%) are living below the federal poverty level.<sup>16</sup> According to a report published in 1997 by Massachusetts KIDS COUNT, the federal government's official poverty line formula is widely believed to underestimate the depth and extent of poverty in the United States. The poverty line measure was set by the US Department of Agriculture in the mid-1960s and, among other things, includes no allowance for child care and only insufficient allotments to other expenses. They go on to say that "[i]n a state such as Massachusetts with high housing, fuel, and food costs, the measure is particularly deceptive." Thus, many people consider the 19.5% of individuals who fall below the federal poverty level to be destitute or living in "deep poverty". Households with earnings above the poverty line may actually be living in conditions of poverty, although they don't fit within the federal definition of poverty. Forty percent of the population earns more than \$50,000/year.<sup>17</sup>

Poverty among female-headed families with no husband present is very prevalent in Boston, as it is statewide. Overall, 29% of these Boston families live below the federal poverty level. Fully 45.6% of female-headed families with children under 5 live in poverty while 37.4% of female-headed families with children under 18 live in poverty. (see **FIGURE 5**)

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & Massachusetts.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

FIGURE 5



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & Massachusetts.

#### d) Language

While slightly more than 80% of individuals 5 years and older statewide speak only English at home, this figure drops to 67% for Boston residents. The second most spoken language used at home after English is Spanish, with 13.6% of the city's residents speaking it in the home. Some 12.1% of Bostonians speak one of a mix of other Indo-European languages. Another 6.2% of individuals speak an API language. Of particular note is the statistic that 16.5% of Bostonians speak English *less than* "Very Well", which is comprised of 6.5% Spanish, 5.3% Other Indo-European, 4% API, and 0.5% Other.<sup>18</sup>

#### e) Immigration

Nearly 75% of Bostonians in 2000 were native born to the U.S.A. Of the quarter of the population who were foreign born, almost half (47.6%) were born in Latin America and nearly a quarter were Asian born. Europe was the region of birth for 17.5% of the foreign-born in Boston and Africa was the region of birth for 9%. Of all of those Bostonians who were foreign born, some 12.5% entered the country between 1990 and 2000. Citizenship was obtained by nearly 10% of those who were foreign born.<sup>19</sup> (see Immigration Figures in the Boston Secondary Data Report in the **Appendices**)

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & Massachusetts.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & Massachusetts.

### 3) **THE AEL-RELATED NEEDS OF BOSTON RESIDENTS**

The AEL-related needs of Boston residents are numerous and complex. The results of the multiple methods research conducted for this report indicate that there is a pressing need for more AEL services of all kinds throughout Boston. (see Citywide Primary Data Report in **Appendices**) Demand for services grossly exceeds availability of services. More classes are needed at all times, especially at night and on the weekends. Not only does there need to be more offerings of existing classes, but also more class offerings, such as, further educational opportunities (college transition, nursing assistance certification, and vocational), ESOL-ABE bridge classes, native language literacy, life skills, and more. More assistance in the area of job readiness/employment search is also critical.

A tremendous need that underlies all others is the need for more student support to ensure the immediate and long-term success of students. Not only do students need help with tutoring and translation and interpretation (in the classroom as well as in day to day existence), many also need support around a host of personal and family-related issues. Specifically, well-coordinated social services would help students and their families by providing counseling and fostering self-esteem, building linkages to much-needed resources, and assisting with navigating around day to day obstacles.

#### **a) Language**

Boston is a city with rich linguistic diversity. It is also a city with a sizeable population that is in need of improved language skills. With only two-thirds of its residents over the age of 5 speaking only English at home, a third of the city is speaking other languages in addition to or instead of English in the home. Among the city's 13.6% of the population that speaks Spanish in the home, 6.5% self-report that they speak English *less than* "Very Well". Speakers of Other Indo-European and API languages also self-report speaking English with comparable limitations.<sup>20</sup> (see Boston Citywide Secondary Data Report in the **Appendices**)

According to AEL needs surveys of 732 current and potential students, providers, employers, and others, conducted in 2000 for this report, 42% identified ESOL as the top need for individuals.<sup>21</sup> Poor language skills were seen as a barrier to securing employment, navigating day-to-day demands, and succeeding at all levels of educational pursuits.<sup>22</sup> In depth interviews, conducted in several neighborhoods throughout the city with 10 key informants found that six of the 10 interviewees cited English/language skills

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<sup>20</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & Massachusetts.

<sup>21</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Surveys Summary of Needs and Barriers by Neighborhoods and Respondents, Navin Associates, 10/02.

<sup>22</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Focus Group Analysis and Data Analysis Report: Aggregate Program Information Survey, Navin

as a significant need.<sup>23</sup> Finally, 5 out of 10 neighborhood coalitions that conducted focus group research identified a desire for more conversational opportunities to improve English proficiency among ESOL students.<sup>24</sup>

With the state's growing dependence on foreign immigration for growth in the state's civilian labor force, comes a growing demand and potential demand for AEL, and especially ESOL instruction in Massachusetts.<sup>25</sup> The need for additional AEL services in Massachusetts and Boston has been recognized by the business community as well. In a November 2002 opinion page editorial in the Boston Globe (see **Appendices**), Lawrence K. Fish, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Citizens Financial Group, Inc. discussed the importance of immigrants to the workforce and the ramifications of language barriers concluding:

“Clearly more needs to be done. ... That means that the business community, organized labor, and non-profit groups, who understand the contributions of immigrants to our economy, need to do more. ... One place to start is ... to update our commitments for meeting the exploding demand for ESL courses.”<sup>26</sup>

According to AEL program staff across the city, average waitlists for ESOL classes are long, ranging from a minimum of one and a maximum of 24 months across 48 programs in 14 neighborhoods. The wait lists for some classes are closed when they get too high, implying that wait lists of some programs may understate actual demand. While 35% of programs had wait lists of less than 6 months, 25% of programs reported an average wait right of 6 months and another 18% had waitlists of more than 6 months.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, according to AEL program staff, it is known that long wait lists discourage potential learners from applying to take a class.

## **b) Credentials**

While more than half of Boston residents 25 years & older have attained more than a high school education, more notable is the significant number who lack a high school diploma. More than one in five Bostonians 25 and older (21.1%) did not graduate from high school. While 12% of Bostonians attended some high school without finishing, 9.1% left school before completing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>28</sup> There is significant variation from neighborhood to neighborhood with the proportion of adults over 25 without diplomas going as high as

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<sup>23</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Key Informant Interviews, Navin Associates, 9/02.

<sup>24</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Focus Group Analysis, Navin Associates, 9/02.

<sup>25</sup> New Skills for a New Economy: Adult Education's Key Role in Sustaining Economic Growth and Expanding Opportunity, MassINC., December 2000.

<sup>26</sup> Boston Globe, *Mastering English for Economic Reasons*, Lawrence K. Fish. November 23, 2002

<sup>27</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Data Analysis Report: Aggregate Program Information Survey, Navin Associates, 12/02

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & Massachusetts.

40.3% in East Boston and 33.7% in Chinatown. The neighborhoods with the lowest figures were the Fenway at 9.8% and the North End at 11.7%.<sup>29</sup> (see **FIGURE 6**)

Boston's 2001 annual high school dropout rate of 8.4% was more than twice the Massachusetts rate of 3.5%.<sup>30</sup> Among those included in the dropout rate are the 14.6% of Boston mothers over 18 years of age who gave birth in 1999 who did not have a high school diploma. Many believe that the proportion of Boston Public School (BPS) students who do not receive a high school diploma is likely to increase due to MCAS graduation requirements in the years to come, based on such data as the following:

- 48% of tenth graders in spring 2002 failed the MCAS in Mathematics;
- 31% of tenth graders in spring 2002 failed the MCAS in Language Arts;
- BPS students failed these test approximately twice as often as students statewide.<sup>31</sup>

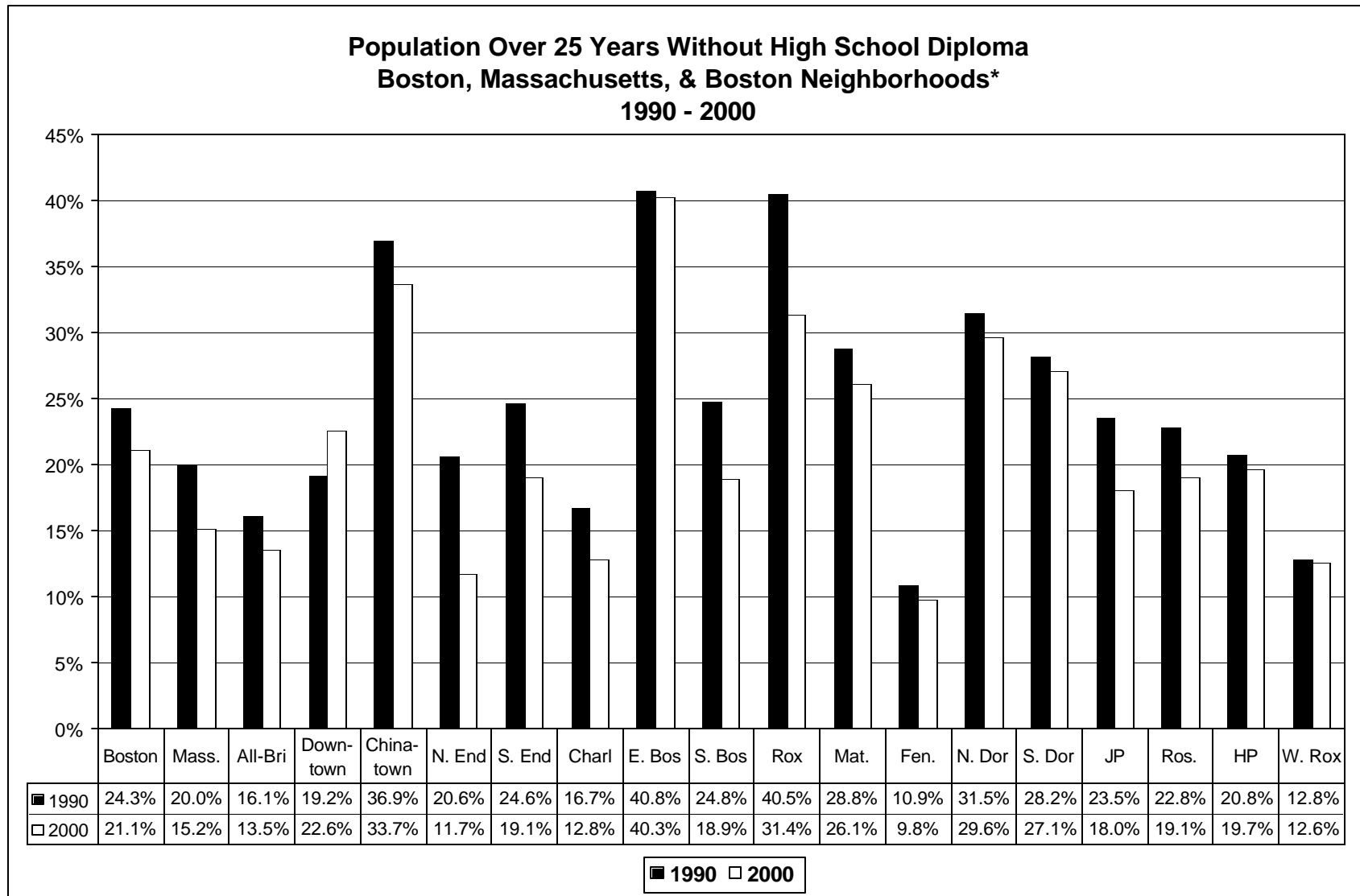
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<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Unpublished results from a survey conducted as part of Action for Boston Community Development's Community Services Block Grant triennial needs assessment.

<sup>31</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education, 2000 and 2001 MCAS District Results and Spring Summary MCAS Tests: Summary of State Results

**FIGURE 6**



\*Boston neighborhood definitions based on Boston Redevelopment Authority Planning Districts with the exception of Downtown Boston (census tracts 303 & 701, North End (census tracts 301-305) & Chinatown (census tracts 701-705).

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Table DP-2 Profile of Social Characteristics: 2000, Table DP-2 Profile of Social Characteristics: 1990

BPS dropout rates do not include middle school dropouts, all of whom had to be 16 years of age to drop out. The number of middle school dropouts from the BPS shot up 310% from 37 in 1995/1996 to 152 in 2000/2001. The majority of Boston's middle school dropouts leave school with less than a 6<sup>th</sup> grade education. Students who drop out of Boston's middle grades make up an increasing proportion of all middle grade dropouts in Massachusetts. In 1995-96, one fifth (20.2%) of the state's middle grades dropouts came from Boston. In 2000/2001, more than one-half (58.2%) of the state's middle grades dropouts came from Boston. African American and Latino students together represented 75.4% of all Boston students, but 86.8% of all middle grades dropouts.<sup>32</sup>

Providers of human and workforce development services in the Downtown area perceive a high need for AEL services among their clients.<sup>33</sup> A prominent member of the business community, Lawrence K. Fish, spoke out about the need for AEL services as well (see **Appendices**)<sup>34</sup> There are limited job training programs for GED/EDP graduates and fewer to none for people without a high school diploma or equivalent.<sup>35</sup> Nearly four in ten dropouts in Massachusetts in recent years were immigrants.<sup>36</sup> Massachusetts immigrants are four times as likely as native-born workers to lack a high school diploma.<sup>37</sup> A lack of credentials, at a minimum in the form of a high school diploma, is an impediment to career advancement.

### c) Improved or New Skills

There is a significant need for workers to improve and/or obtain new skills despite their credentials. According to a 2000 report by MassInc entitled *New Skills for a New Economy: Adult Education's Key Role in Sustaining Economic Growth and Expanding Opportunity*<sup>38</sup>, "1 in 3 workers are not adequately prepared for the new economy". MassInc found that the rapidly changing and more complex skills needed by individuals to advance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy are considerably different than the skills that were being taught in the schools, leaving many students unprepared to succeed economically.

Bostonians with high school diplomas may be especially unprepared for the workforce. Results from the 2001 MCAS<sup>39</sup> show that as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, more than three-quarters of students received "Needs Improvement" or "Warning" grades. For students in

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<sup>32</sup> Unpublished paper by Anne Wheelock, Research Associate, Progress Through the Education Pipeline Project Boston College. 617-524-7324

<sup>33</sup> DIAL Primary Data Report, p. 5, in **Appendices**

<sup>34</sup> Boston Globe, *Mastering English for Economic Reasons*, Lawrence K. Fish. November 23, 2002

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 2

<sup>36</sup> *New Skill for a New Economy: Adult Education's Key Role in Sustaining Economic Growth and Expanding Opportunity*. MassINC. 2000, p. vii

<sup>37</sup> *New Skill for a New Economy: Adult Education's Key Role in Sustaining Economic Growth and Expanding Opportunity*. MassINC. 2000, p. vii

<sup>38</sup> *New Skills for a New Economy: Adult Education's Key Role in Sustaining Economic Growth and Expanding Opportunity*, Comings, Sum and Uvin, MassINC, December 2000

<sup>39</sup> Despite the controversy surrounding the use of MCAS as a high stakes graduation requirement, the results are worth examining to obtain a broad sense of student academic achievement.

the 10<sup>th</sup> grade nearing graduation, a similar lack of ability with the subject matter is demonstrated in the MCAS results.<sup>40</sup> Poor MCAS scores among graduating seniors indicate that students are not becoming proficient in the basic core areas of their studies, upon which much else is built; mathematics, language arts, and history/social sciences.

GED, EDP, and diploma classes are in high demand by individuals across the city and represent 46% of AEL classes citywide, according to respondents in a recent survey.<sup>41</sup> Participants in focus group and survey research conducted in 14 neighborhoods citywide also identified a constellation of needs that fall under the rubric of new and improved skills (not including ESOL and GED). In particular, they said they needed: computer training, further education (nursing certification, vocational, college), financial literacy, and job readiness<sup>42</sup> - - some of the newly needed skills identified in the MassInc. report.<sup>43</sup> (see **FIGURE 7**)

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<sup>40</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education, 2000 and 2001 MCAS District Results and Spring Summary MCAS Tests: Summary of State Results

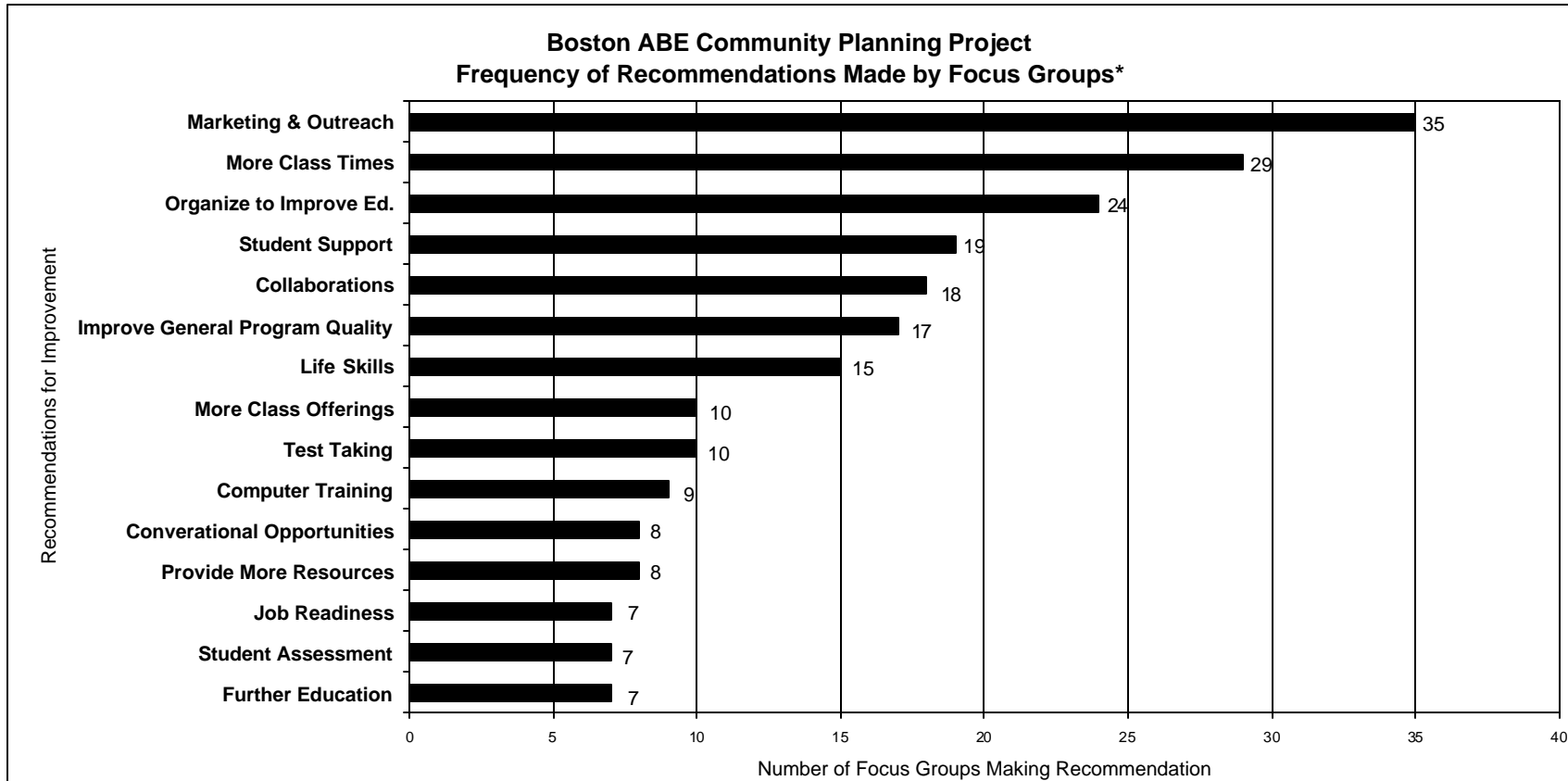
<sup>41</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Data Analysis Report: Staff Survey, Navin Associates, 2002

<sup>42</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Focus Group Analysis and Data Analysis Report: Aggregate Program Information Survey, Navin Associates, 9/02.

<sup>43</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Focus Group Analysis, Navin Associates, 9/02.



FIGURE 7



\*10 Boston neighborhood coalitions conducted a total of 54 focus groups as part of their community assets and needs assessments. The numbers in this chart reflect the number of focus groups in which one or more participants made the recommendation being reported.

Source: Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Focus Group Results, August 2002

**d) Parents and intergenerational literacy**

According to a report released in February 2002 by The Foundation for Child Development “[a]ge, gender and family background characteristics affect children’s skills and knowledge. Children with below average skills entering kindergarten tend to have: a mother with less than a high school education; a family that received food stamps or cash welfare payments; a single parent as head of household; and/or parents with a primary language other than English.”<sup>44</sup> Poor children are more likely than other children to score lower on standardized tests, be retained in grade, drop out of school, end up as poor adults, and suffer other undesirable outcomes.<sup>45</sup>

There are many indicators showing that the aforementioned conditions exist in Boston and they will continue to severely restrict the potential academic and career achievement of its children. (see ABE Planning Project: Boston Secondary Data Report, Navin Associates in the **Appendices** for more information) Boston’s neighborhoods with the greatest numbers of children also have the lowest adult educational attainment rates.<sup>46</sup>

- ⇒ More than a fifth (21.1%) of Boston residents did not graduate high school.
- ⇒ Of Boston mothers giving birth in 1999, 14.6% did not have a high school diploma.<sup>47</sup>
- ⇒ While 24.5% of Boston families with children under five are living in deep poverty, this figure jumps to 45.6% in female-headed households.<sup>48</sup>
- ⇒ Slightly more than a quarter of Boston’s residents are foreign born, twice that of statewide statistics.<sup>49</sup>
- ⇒ Approximately 81% of Boston’s foreign born come from Latin America, Asia, or Africa.<sup>50</sup>
- ⇒ A third of Boston households do not speak English at home.<sup>51</sup>

The disadvantages that non-English speaking and non-literate parents and their children face with respect to many aspects of everyday life are especially glaring with regard to their child’s educational pursuits. Assisting with homework and communicating with teachers, both critical to academic success, are very difficult for non-English speaking and non-literate parents. These same parents are disadvantaged when it comes to problem

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<sup>44</sup> Zill 1996a in High Stakes: Time Poverty, Testing, and the Children of the Working Poor. Chin and Newman. The Foundation for Child Development Working Paper Series. 2002

<sup>45</sup> The Future of Children: Children and Poverty. The Center for the Future of Children. 1997

<sup>46</sup> The Wisdom of Our Choices: Boston’s Indicators of Progress, Change and Sustainability 2000. The Boston Foundation. 2000

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & Massachusetts.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

solving when challenges arise for their children and themselves, such as learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and managing school conflicts.

Parents of pre-school and school-age children, who want to pursue basic adult education opportunities, must first find child care for their children. As of 2002, there were 37,295 children living in Boston under the age of five. A child care slot in a licensed infant/toddler or preschool setting was available to less than half (17,635) of Boston's children under 5. While the waitlist has 3,889 children, even more families might choose to place their children in one of these settings if space were available and if it were affordable.<sup>52</sup>

**e) At-risk and special needs residents**

Many residents of Boston are at-risk and in need of special services, both AEL-related and in general. More than a fifth of households earn less than \$15,000/year. Another 37.9% of households earn between \$15,000 and \$49,000/year. With rising housing costs, many of these households are at risk of homelessness. According to the 2000 US Census, 15.3% of families with children and 45% of female-headed households with young children were living below the poverty level. Problems associated with poverty, such as hunger and low academic achievement may put these families at additional risk. Some specific population needs are unique to particular neighborhoods while others are experienced citywide.

The AEL-related needs of Boston's immigrant population are, at times, as diverse as the populations themselves and addressing the needs requires hand-tailored solutions.

- Immigrants from certain countries are more likely to be well-educated, while immigrants from others are more likely to be less educated. The AEL needs will differ accordingly.
- Immigrants from countries with cultures that have more in common with U.S. culture may have different needs than immigrants from countries with less in common with the U.S. For instance, immigrants from countries with more similar alphabets and root languages and more exposure to U.S. popular culture and cuisine may face fewer obstacles to adapting to their new home. Others (like the Vietnamese community in Dorchester) may need additional support services to facilitate connecting to larger mainstream society, including the Boston Public Schools.
- Gender differences and constraints may also vary from country to country for immigrants. For instance, one Chinese focus group participant said "In the Chinese family, the men work in the restaurants: the women learn English".
- Significant differences among learners about their perceptions about learning emerged in many neighborhoods.

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<sup>52</sup> Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services, Boston Public Health Commission, Action for Boston Community Development Head Start

Residents of public housing in many neighborhoods in the city are in need of AEL services and, yet, are particularly difficult to recruit into AEL programs according to providers of AEL services.

- Interrelated issues of poverty and a low educational attainment for many residents of public housing are significant obstacles to entering and advancing in the work force.
- Given the significant gains that could be made by residents of public housing through utilizing AEL services, more effective recruitment and better support of the students is indicated.

Low-income, single mothers have a myriad of AEL-related needs with transportation and child care being the most concrete and easily identifiable among the many.

- Additional support to low-income mothers to boost self-esteem and to coordinate multiple social service needs would improve the likelihood of success in AEL-pursuits.

Younger adult learners (under 25 years old) have introduced new challenges into the classroom as their presence in the classroom increases.

- Younger learners often don't demonstrate the same commitment to learning or seriousness as slightly older learners. There is a need to develop more effective ways to manage the sometimes conflicting agendas of older and younger learners.

There are multigenerational issues affecting families in need of family literacy initiatives.

- The whole family faces obstacles to academic achievement according to a recently released report by MassInc.  
    “Children with below average skills entering kindergarten tend to have: a mother with less than a high school education; a family that received food stamps or cash welfare payments; a single parent as head of household; and/or parents with a primary language other than English”. Family literacy initiatives are needed to address the specific AEL-related needs of families

Low wage workers need more convenient class schedules and stronger supports to facilitate class enrollment and attendance and to help with persistence and retention.

- Class schedules and tutoring are needed to complement the work schedules of workers in particular industrial groups, e.g., hotel workers, janitors, food service workers, and hospital workers.

- Advocacy with Boston employers to encourage them to provide workplace education programs (as is more common in other parts of the state) as well as on scheduling-related issues is needed.

Homeless individuals and families have particularly complex needs for an array of comprehensive services, including AEL services.

Mattapan has the eighth highest enrollment by zip code within the city in AEL classes, but there are no DOE-funded classes within Mattapan. Residents of this neighborhood may benefit from being able to attend AEL classes nearer to home.

#### 4) *MAP*

A map of Boston showing, by census tract, the percentages of families living in poverty, the percentage of adults 25 and over without a high school diploma, and the percentage of adults who do not speak English very well is in the **Appendices** of this document.

#### 5) *CHANGES IN BOSTON*

##### **a) Size of population**

Boston's population grew by 14,859 or 2.59% from 1990 to 2000, making it one of only two older northern and mid-western cities to gain in population over the last two decades. Nevertheless, six neighborhoods lost population in the 1990s, while ten neighborhoods gained. East Boston, Central Boston, and North Dorchester experienced the largest population gains. Eighty percent of the population gain in Boston was accounted for in Dorchester and East Boston. Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and Back-Bay/Beacon Hill experienced the biggest population losses.

##### **b) Racial/ethnic make-up of population**

Between 1990 and 2000 there have been marked shifts in the racial/ethnic make-up of the population. The White population of Boston dropped 10 percentage points to 49.5% and the Minority population rose to 50.5%. The largest population increase among minorities was in the Hispanic population, which increased by 3.6 percentage points to 14.4%. Asians/Pacific Islanders experienced an increase of 2.3 percentage points in population growth. Individuals identifying as non-Hispanic multi-racial increased by 3.1 percentage points. No gains in population were experienced by non-Hispanic Blacks and Native Americans.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Boston Redevelopment Authority, Boston's Population – 2000, Changes in Population, Race, and Ethnicity in Boston and Boston's Neighborhoods – 1980 – 2000, City of Boston 2000 Census Data, 4/24/01, 2000 Tiger File.

The proportion of Latino residents increased in all but three neighborhoods, Jamaica Plain, Allston-Brighton and Fenway-Kenmore. The increases were significant in East Boston, Hyde Park and Mattapan. In absolute terms, East Boston attracted the largest number of Latinos during the decade. Roxbury, Roslindale, Mattapan, and Hyde Park are other neighborhoods in which the proportion of Latino residents rose.<sup>54</sup>

The only neighborhood to show a decline in the proportion of Asians was the South End, while there was an increase in all other neighborhoods, particularly in Allston-Brighton, Jamaica Plain, and Dorchester.

There has been a marked shift in the proportions of Whites and Minorities in almost all the neighborhoods. South Boston, Charlestown and West Roxbury have the highest proportion of Whites, although the number of Whites has fallen over the decades and the number of Minorities has increased. The number of Whites increased in only three neighborhoods: Central Boston, the South End, and Fenway-Kenmore.

Roxbury, Mattapan, and North Dorchester have the highest proportion of Blacks. There were large gains in the Black population in Roslindale and Hyde Park accompanied by small but significant growth in the proportion of Blacks in some predominantly White neighborhoods.

### **c) Education**

There was good news from the 2000 Census regarding the educational attainment of Bostonians. The percentage of residents with education beyond high school increased by 5.8 percentage points to 54.9%, while the percentages fell for less than 9th grade (-1.2 points), 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade with no diploma (-2.0 points), and high school graduate (-2.6 points).<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, annual BPS high school dropout rates between 1996 and 2001 rose from 7.2% to 8.3%, an increase of 1.1 points compared to a statewide increase of 0.1 points. Similarly, BPS cohort dropout rates increased. Among BPS students who entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 1994, 23.2% were likely to dropout within the next five years; that percentage rose to 25.5% of the 1996 ninth grade class.

There were across the board improvements in MCAS results for BPS students from 2000 to 2001. While the failing/warning results still ranged from 21% to 55% depending on the subject matter and the grade being tested, this represented a drop in the failing/warning rate by an average of 10 percentage points from the year before. [Ensure that this reflects

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<sup>54</sup> Boston Redevelopment Authority, *Boston's Population – 2000*, 8. Neighborhoods Profiles, Report #554, April 2002.

<sup>55</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & DP-2 Social Characteristics: 1990, Boston city, Massachusetts.*

the secondary data, which is for 2000-2002.] Students were becoming better prepared for this instrument, but still had significant gaps in academic proficiency. For example, in 2002, 31% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders failed the English Language Arts test and 48% failed the Mathematics test.<sup>56</sup>

As the non-English speaking population increased in the city of Boston from 1990 to 2000, students in bilingual programs became concentrated more in the Spanish program, which increased by 5.1 percentage points to 59.1% of all bilingual program students. Small percentage increases occurred in the Portuguese and Somalian programs also. Decreases occurred in the Cambodian, Cape Verdian, Chinese, Haitian, and Vietnamese bilingual programs.<sup>57</sup>

#### **d) Income and Employment**

According to Acting Governor Swift's October 2002 report on the economy,

“Massachusetts has undergone a profound economic transition over the past ten years... adapt[ing]...to a “New Economy” characterized by knowledge-intensive production, high-tech innovation, and global trading. During the 1990s, workers lacking a college degree [the requisite skills for survival in this “new economy”] experienced little income growth. In fact, after controlling for inflation, many of [Massachusetts's] less well-educated workers actually saw their wages decline during the 1990s.”<sup>58</sup>

The available labor force in Boston fluctuated from a low of 287,939 to a high of 310,068 throughout this 10 year period, with an overall decline of 2.8 percentage points. (see **FIGURE 8**) Meanwhile, the number of working parents with children under 5 years of age in the labor force increased by 2.6 percentage points to 56.7%. The unemployment rate peaked in 1991 at 9.2% and then showed a steady decline for the remainder of the decade. Statistics for 2001 and 2002 show that the unemployment rate is, once again, on the rise. By June 2002, the unemployment rate of 5.4% was slightly below the 2000 rate of 5.7%.<sup>59</sup>

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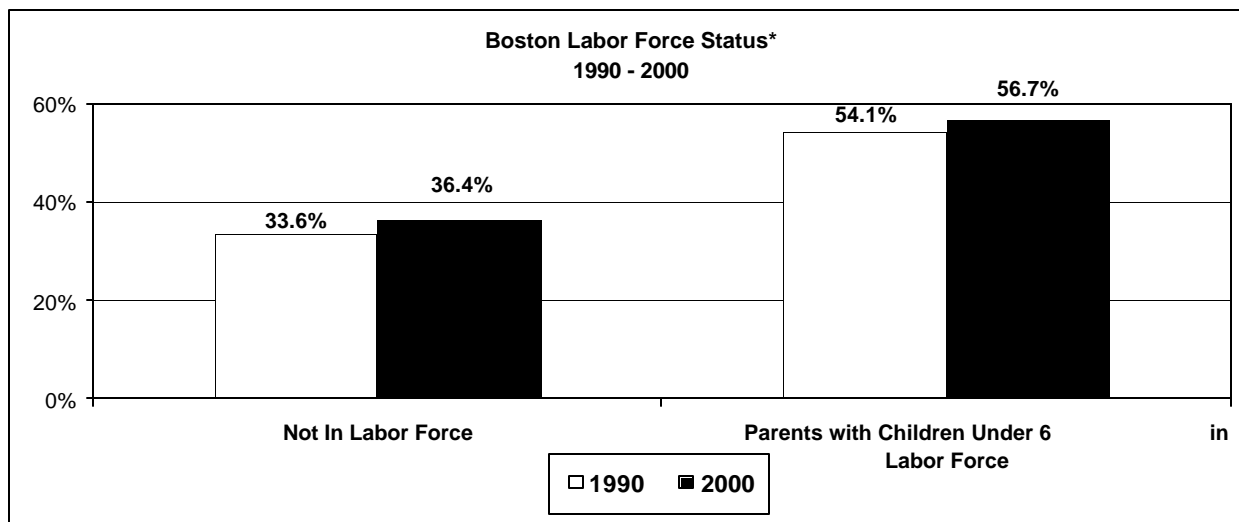
<sup>56</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education, 2000 and 2001 MCAS School Results, English Language Arts and Mathematics, Grade 4, Grade 8, Grade 10, November 1, 2001

<sup>57</sup> Boston Public Schools, Focus on Children, Changing Trends in Bilingual Enrollment Programmatic Enrollment in Boston Neighborhoods, 1990 – 2000.

<sup>58</sup> Toward a New Prosperity: Acting Governor Swift's Report on The Economy, October 2002.

<sup>59</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training, MassStats, Local Area Labor Statistics.

**FIGURE 8**



\*Population 16 years and older

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & DP-3 Labor Force Status and Employment Characteristics, 1990, Boston city, Massachusetts

#### e) Poverty

Because the poverty rate usually goes down when more people are employed, it is alarming to note that poverty among families and individuals in Boston rose between 1990 and 2000, during a time when the unemployment rate had decreased and more people were working. The unemployment rate dropped by 2.5 percentage points from June 1990 to June 2000 (from 5.7% to 3.2%) while at the same time the percentage of individuals living in poverty increased by 0.8 percentage points to 19.5% and the percentage of families living in poverty increased by 0.3 percentage points to 15.3%.<sup>60</sup> As of June 2002, at 5.4% the Boston unemployment rate had reversed direction and climbed close to the 1990 level.<sup>61</sup>

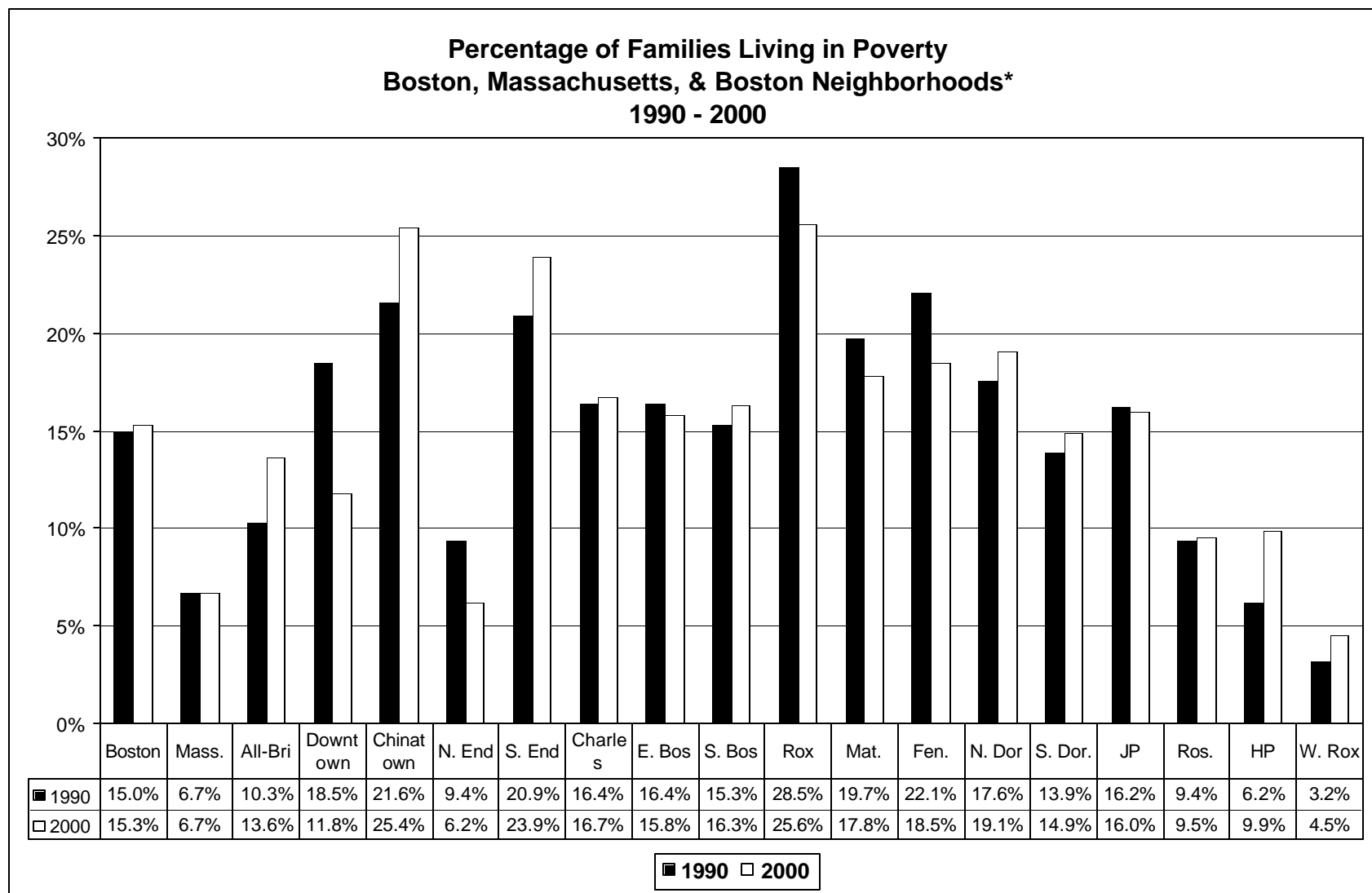
There is significant variation between neighborhoods in the percentages of families living in poverty and in the percentage change in poverty from 1990 to 2000. While Roxbury continues to have the largest percentage of families living in poverty (25.6%), there is less poverty (by 2.9 percentage points) than there was in 1990. Conversely, Chinatown and the South End experienced an increase in the percentages of families living in poverty (by 3.8 and 3 percentage points respectively) from 1990 to 2000. (see **FIGURE 9**)

<sup>60</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & DP-4 Income and Poverty Status in 1990, Boston city, Massachusetts.

<sup>61</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training, MassStats, Local Area Labor



FIGURE 9



\*Boston neighborhood definitions based on Boston Redevelopment Authority Planning Districts with the exception of Downtown Boston (census tracts 303 & 701, North End (census tracts 301-305) & Chinatown (census tracts 701-705).

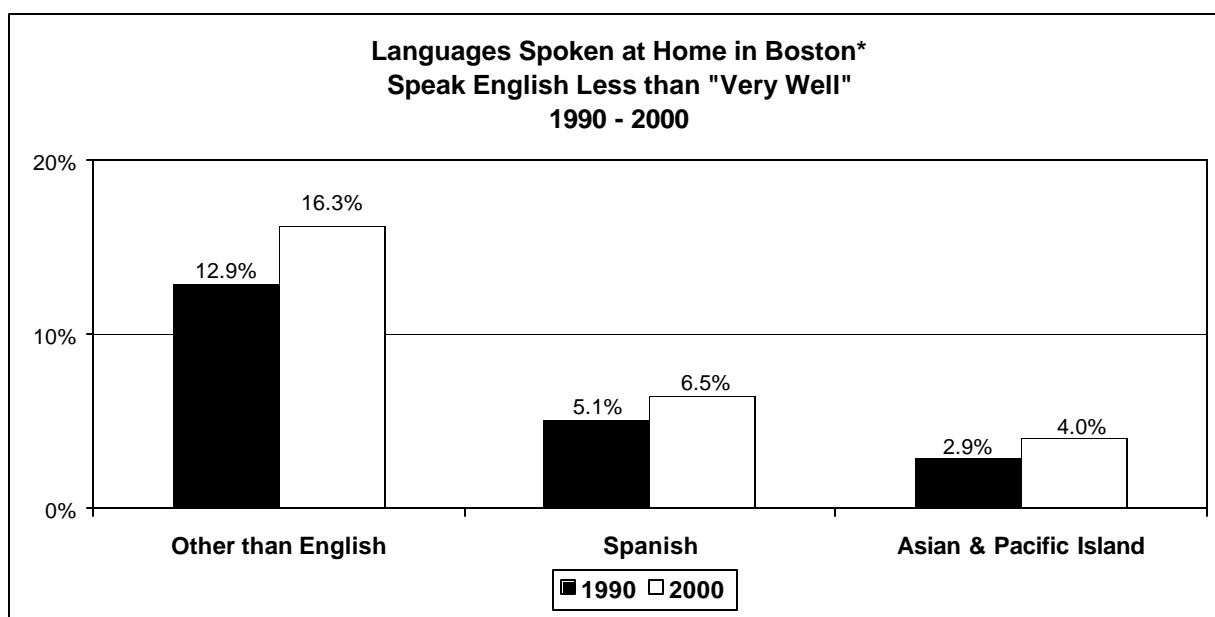
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Table QT-P34 Poverty Status in 1999 of Individuals: 2000, QT-P35 Poverty Status in 1999 of Families and Nonfamily Householders: 2000, and DP-4 Income and Poverty Status in 1989: 1990

## f) Language

Boston is undergoing a steady change from being an English dominant city to one that is more linguistically diverse. In 1990, nearly three-quarters of Bostonians over the age of 5 spoke only English in the home. By 2000, this dropped by nearly 8 percentage points to two-thirds of the population. The most significant increase occurred among Spanish speakers, followed by Asian and Pacific Islanders. It is noteworthy that, while the number of speakers of other languages increased, proportionately fewer of them than in 1990 could speak English very well. That is, not only were there many more people from non-English speaking countries living in Boston in 2000, but also a higher percentage of them did not speak English very well.<sup>62</sup> (see **FIGURE 10**)

Most neighborhoods in Boston experienced an increase in the percentage of homes speaking languages other than English. The three neighborhoods with the greatest increases over 1990 levels were East Boston, Hyde Park, and Roslindale, which each experienced an increase between 10 and 15 percentage points. Two neighborhoods had a decrease in the percentage of homes speaking languages other than English; Chinatown by 4.7 percentage points and Downtown by a small 0.2 percentage points. (see **FIGURE 11**)

**FIGURE 10**

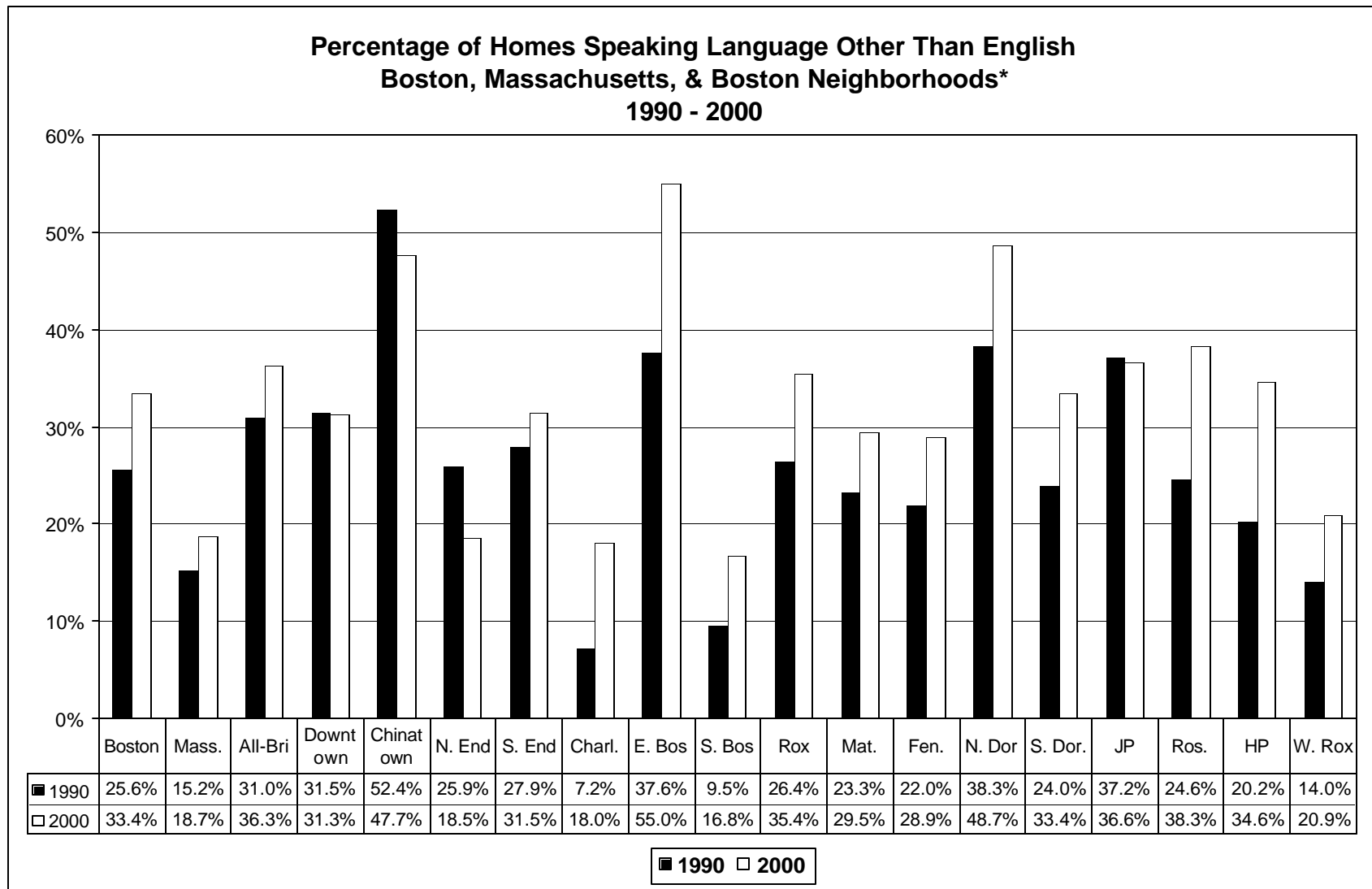


\* Population 5 years of age and over.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & Massachusetts.

<sup>62</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & Massachusetts.

FIGURE 11



\*Boston neighborhood definitions based on Boston Redevelopment Authority Planning Districts with the exception of Downtown Boston (census tracts 303 & 701, North End (census tracts 301-305) & Chinatown (census tracts 701-705).

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Table DP-2 Profile of Social Characteristics: 2000, Table DP-2 Profile of Social Characteristics: 1990

### **g) Immigration**

Immigrants from all over the world continue to be attracted to the city of Boston as a new home. In 1990, one in five Bostonians was foreign born. In 2000 that figure increased by 5.5 percentage points to more than a quarter of the population. About 12.5% of foreign born entered from 1990 to 2000. This is slightly more than the number who entered in the 10 years prior to 1990<sup>63</sup>. There was a noticeable decrease in Bostonians reporting that their ancestors hailed from European countries from 1990 to 2000. The European country with the largest decrease was Ireland, by 5 percentage points. Small increases in ancestry which ranged from 0.1% to 2.1% were reported for (from smallest to largest): Arab, Ukrainian, Welsh, Sub-Saharan African, and West Indian (excluding Hispanic groups). According to the 234 staff members in 14 neighborhoods surveyed for this report, many communities are experiencing similar increases in immigrants from specific countries as identified in the census data.<sup>64</sup> Among those cited in the Staff Survey were: Africa (Sudan, Somalia, Morocco), South America (Brazil, Columbia), the Caribbean and West Indies (Haiti, Dominican Republic), Albania, China, and Cape Verde.

### **h) Housing**

The cost of housing in Boston skyrocketed in every neighborhood from 1991 to 2001. In home sales, the median price climbed the highest in Charlestown and Central Boston to approximately \$375,000. All neighborhoods experienced a doubling or tripling of median sales prices over the 10 year period with the exception of Hyde Park, where prices fell just short of doubling from 1990.<sup>65</sup> The citywide median advertised asking rent for a two bedroom apartment in 1995 was \$909 and it went up to \$1,448 in 2000.<sup>66</sup> Despite the significant increases in rental costs, the cost of gross rent as a percentage of household income went down for most households from 1990 to 2000, which may be due to longer-term residents being replaced by new higher income residents. Despite the overall decreases in the rent to income ratio, more than 32.1% of households spent 35% or more of their monthly income on rent.<sup>67</sup>

### **i) Welfare**

The caseload of Boston families receiving Transitional Assistance decreased dramatically between July 1997 and February 2002, the period for which figures were available from

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<sup>63</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-3 Profile of Selected Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, & Massachusetts.

<sup>64</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Data Analysis Report: Staff Survey, Navin Associates, 2002

<sup>65</sup> The Warren Group, Town Stats, Free Market Statistics, February 2000

<sup>66</sup> Citywide median may reflect a higher number than actual citywide rents, due to the higher volume of advertised rents concentrated in the central neighborhoods, which often have the highest rents. City of Boston, Program Development Division, Department of Neighborhood Development, Federal FY2001 Draft Action Plan for Community Development Citizen Summary, The Boston Globe apartment listings first Sunday of the month. Apartments that include utilities or parking in the monthly rent are not represented in this survey

<sup>67</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Table DP-4 Profile of Selected Housing Characteristics: 2000, Boston city, Massachusetts & DP-5 Housing Characteristics: 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3) – Sample data Boston city, Massachusetts

the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance. The falling unemployment rate from 1991 to 2000 and the adoption of new state and federal laws governing welfare eligibility both contributed to this change. The Boston caseload dropped nearly 48 percentage points from 17,731 in 1997 to 7648 in 2000. Since 2000, however, both the welfare caseload and unemployment have risen sharply.

**j) Crime**

There has been a nearly 7% increase in the commission of Part One Crimes over the three year period from 1999 to 2001 according to citywide crime statistics. Part One crimes include seven categories of the more serious crimes, with four for violent crime.<sup>68</sup> The Boston Police Department attributes the rise in crime rates to recidivism among the recently released inmates who had been incarcerated in the early 1990 as part of a citywide crack down on crime.

**6) SPECIAL CHALLENGES TO BOSTON RESIDENTS NEEDING ABE SERVICES**

Many common themes about the special challenges faced by Boston residents in regard to AEL services emerged from analysis of the data gathered for this report. These barriers affect a student's ability both to pursue AEL services and to succeed in them once they have initiated their studies.

**a) Child Care and other family responsibilities**

Family responsibilities and particularly the need for safe and affordable child care are obstacles to attendance, especially for mothers of children under 5. There was a significant shortage of licensed child care slots for children under 5 in the city of Boston as of 2000. With total capacity at 17,635 and 3,889 children on a waitlist, many of the city's 37,295 children under five had no child care available to them.<sup>69</sup> Parents of young children were inhibited from pursuing AEL services due to inadequate child care. Once enrolled, many parents found that ongoing child care problems undermined their successfully achieving their AEL goals. Child care was the top barrier cited by all 10 Boston neighborhoods participating in AEL focus groups in 2002. (see **FIGURE 12** and **FIGURE 13**). It was also cited as a top barrier by 30% of 478 individuals responding to AEL surveys about needs and barriers.<sup>70</sup> The 234 AEL staff surveyed in 14 neighborhoods also saw lack of child care as an obstacle to success for their students.

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<sup>68</sup> City of Boston, Office of Research and Evaluation, Monthly Crime Statistics, December 2001, February 5, 2001.

<sup>69</sup> Data Analysis: Boston EQUIP, March 2002, Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services, Boston Public Health Commission, Action for Boston Community Development Head Start

<sup>70</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Surveys Summary of Needs and Barriers by Neighborhoods and Respondents, Navin Associates, 10/02.

### **b) Competing class/work schedules**

Many prospective and current students are already stretched by working one or more low wage jobs; frequently their schedules or shifts change with little or no warning. Such scheduling conflicts present a significant challenge to students pursuing and utilizing AEL services in at least two key ways. First, having enough consistently available time was cited as a difficulty by students and potential students and AEL professionals. AEL staff stated that it was the major cause of irregular attendance for students, and irregular attendance was considered a major impediment to success. Second, classes weren't offered enough when the students were most available: nights and weekends. (see **FIGURE 12** and **FIGURE 13**) Nearly a quarter of the individuals surveyed cited job schedule as a barrier.<sup>71</sup>

### **c) Waitlists and class availability**

There is more demand for AEL classes than there are classes available, causing some people to wait up to two years to enroll in a class. Approximately 88% of the 48 AEL programs surveyed reported using a wait list, with the size of the wait lists varying from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 500 individuals. In practice, some programs close the waitlist after it reaches a certain number and few programs do serious marketing or outreach. Sixty percent of the programs reported placing students in 6 months or less. Another 14% of students were placed after 7-12 months on the wait list.<sup>72</sup> Seven of the 10 neighborhoods participating in focus groups also viewed waitlists as a barrier to pursuing AEL. (see **FIGURE 12** and **FIGURE 13**) For many, especially recent immigrants, a delay of six months to enroll in an ESOL class may have serious consequences for successfully navigating the many other areas of one's life: employment, housing, a child's education, and immigration status.

### **d) Interrelatedness of issues**

This study documented a number of interrelated issues facing students that act as a deterrent to student success. Many adult learners were often at the lower end of the economic spectrum, working at physically demanding jobs with long hours or variable schedules and with little scheduling flexibility. English language skills and/or literacy skills in one's native language frequently also had an impact on one's success.<sup>73</sup> Consequently, issues like money, family responsibilities, transportation, time, and lack of information coupled with literacy deficits mounted up to create considerable barriers to success. These issues received significant mention in most of the surveys conducted for this project.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Data Analysis Report: Aggregate Program Information Survey, Navin Associates, 2002

<sup>73</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Data Analysis Report: Staff Survey, Navin Associates, 2002

**FIGURE 12**

**Boston ABE Community Planning Project: Focus Group Summaries\***

**Barriers by Neighborhood**

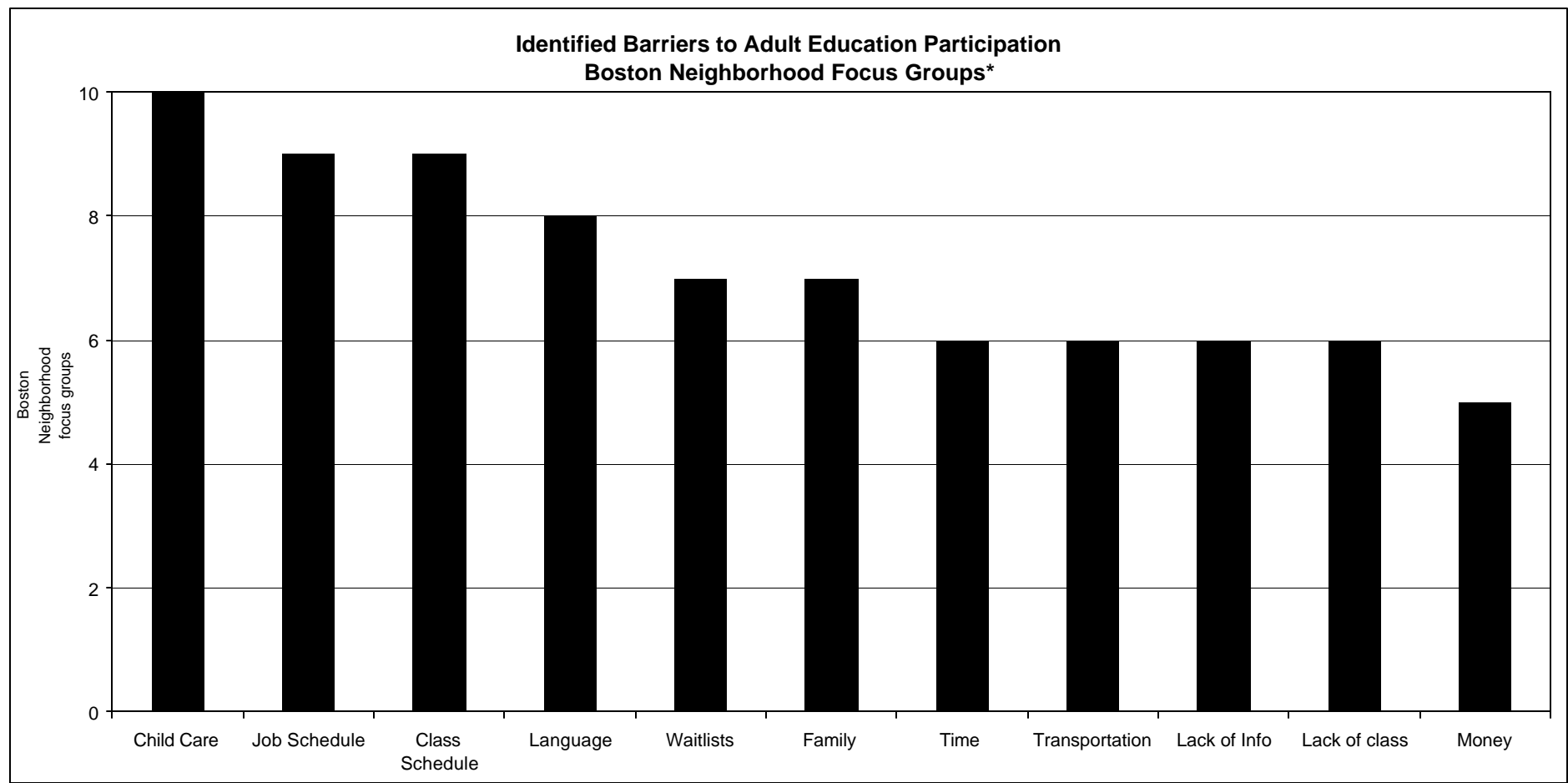
Barrier	So. Boston	Chinatown	Fenway	JP	South End	Roslindale/ Hyde Park	Roxbury	Dorchester	Downtown	All/Bri
Job Schedules		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Time limitations		x	x				x	x	x	x
Family Responsibilities		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lack of Program Info	X	x					x	x	x	x
Child Care	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Transportation				x	x	x	x	x	x	
Money	x						x	x	x	x
Waitlists		x		x		x	x	x	x	x
Class Scheduling	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Language limitations	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
Fear of INS		x				x		x		x
Low of self confidence	x	x					x	x		
Lack of case mgmt	x		x		x					
Low skills	x						x		x	
Learning disabilities	x									
Lack of classes	x	x				x		x	x	x
Cultural barriers		x						x		
Fear of returning to school				x						
Lack of tutors					x		x	x	x	
Lack of counseling								x		
Lack native lang. literacy								x		x

\*10 Boston Neighborhood Coalitions conducted focus groups as part of their community assets and needs assessment. The number represents the fact at least one of the neighborhood's focus groups identified this issue as a barrier to participation.

Source: Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Focus Group Results, August 2002

FIGURE 13

Boston ABE Community Planning Project: Focus Group Summaries



\*10 Boston Neighborhood Coalitions conducted focus groups as part of their community assets and needs assessment. The number represents the fact at least one of the neighborhood's focus groups identified this issue as a barrier to participation.

Source: Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Focus Group Results, August 2002



## **D. BOSTON PROFILE AND ASSETS**

### ***1) INSTITUTIONS IN OR AVAILABLE TO BOSTON***

The city of Boston is rich with institutions that are assets to the general community and, in particular, the AEL community. What follows is an overview of some of these institutions. In addition, in the **Appendices** of this document there is 1) a list of education, training, and human service programs which receive funding from the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services<sup>74</sup> and 2) more facts and figures from *The City of Boston at a Glance.0*

#### **a) City/town Hall & Offices**

City Hall is located in Government Center in downtown Boston and houses the Mayor's Office and many other municipal services. There are many other city departments and offices off-site such as The Boston Public Health Commission, and the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services.

#### **b) Public Schools**

In the year 2000, there were 131 public elementary, middle, and high schools in the city of Boston with a total enrollment of 63,134. An additional 21,388 students were enrolled in private/parochial schools.<sup>75</sup>

#### **c) Higher Education**

Fall 1999 enrollment at Boston's 4 public colleges and universities was 25,210 students both part and full-time. In the Greater Boston area, there were 37 private colleges and universities with a total fall 1999 enrollment of 145,347 part and full-time students. Students in the Greater Boston Area accounted for 41.3% of the total enrollment of students in Massachusetts in the fall of 1999.<sup>76</sup>

#### **d) Adult Education Program Resources**

Boston is home to both local and statewide resources that provide funding and/or technical assistance to adult education programs. These include (resources with website links are grouped together at the end of this list):

- Adult Literacy Resource Institute - the local office of the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES)
  - Staff development and training services
  - Resource library
  - Technical assistance

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<sup>74</sup> Their web site is: <http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/JCSOpportunities.asp>

<sup>75</sup> Boston Facts & Figures: A Statistical Perspective on Boston's Government and its Population, 2002 Edition, Boston Municipal Research Bureau, Inc.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

- Alternative Education Alliance
- Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE)
- Massachusetts Adult Basic Education Curriculum Frameworks – Curriculum Frameworks from the Massachusetts Department of Education
- World Ed - helps people make important transitions as they develop skills and gain knowledge

Web-based Resources

- ConnectNet.org – A website that can find, by zip code, all of the locations where people can access communications technology, including the internet.
- Adult Education Webliography - reviews of Web sites by Boston area adult literacy /ESOL practitioners
- E Square - a Boston area virtual electronic village by and for adult education and ESOL students
- Harnessing Technology to Serve Adult Literacy - technology solutions to common adult education instructional problems
- Inquiry Maps - project-based research by adult learners in Massachusetts
- Technology Collaborative-Boston - adult education programs in the Boston area which use technology
- The Literacy List - adult Literacy/basic education/ESOL Websites, electronic lists, and Internet training resources
- TV 411 - website for TV 411, a basic skills TV video broadcast series for adults
- Virtual Visits - field trips made by adult learners, made into Web pages for those who would like to visit virtually
- Web-based Lesson Plans - lesson plans for adult learners which involve using Web-sites
- WGBH Diploma Connection - an educational television service for adults, including basic skills, ESOL, and GED

**e) Library**

The main branch of the Boston Public Library system was the first public library in the country and is located in Copley Square in downtown Boston. There are also a total of 25 branch libraries located in all neighborhoods throughout the city. There are approximately half a million cards in use in the system. It's collection of books, audio & video materials,

newspapers & magazines in circulation exceeds 6 million.<sup>77</sup> A number of branches offer literacy-promoting activities for adults such as conversation groups for speakers of other languages.

**f) Hospital/Health Centers**

The health care industry is undergoing rapid change with mergers and reductions in most areas and expansion in others. The most current figures available were for the year 2000 when there were 21 hospitals in the city of Boston with 5,770 patient beds. Boston EMS responded to 155,329 calls and transported 63,945 individuals.<sup>78</sup>

**g) Transportation**

Boston has an extensive mass transit system operating under the authority of the MBTA. It includes buses, trains, trolleys, and ferries. This is a very important asset to adult learners and AEL programs. Logan International Airport is located in East Boston. It is currently undergoing major renovations and expansion. Some 55 domestic and international airlines were operating out of Logan in 2000. It served 27.4 million passengers with total airport flight operations of 478,873 in 2000.<sup>79</sup> The airline industry was severely affected by the events of September 2001. Expansion of security services occurred with decreases in overall airline operations. Current capacity and service is not available. There were 784 miles of paved streets and 1,500 miles in paved sidewalks in the city of Boston in 2000<sup>80</sup>.

**h) Corrections**

The Massachusetts Mandatory Literacy Law requires inmates to be tested to determine educational needs and, if reading below an eighth grade level, to participate in a literacy program until they test at the eighth grade level or above. The Suffolk County House of Corrections is located near Boston Medical Center, between Massachusetts Avenue and the Southeast Expressway. It housed about 1,800 inmates in 2000 and in 2003 will complete construction of another major wing. Many inmates need AEL services. The Education Program operates 52 weeks per year and employs about two dozen full-time teachers, 90% funded by Suffolk County. The Program serves about 600 incarcerated adult learners per month, approximately 200 earning GEDs and 60 earning EDP diplomas per year. There also are: three levels of ESOL instruction; Chapter 1 reading and writing instruction for inmates less than 22 years of age; a Special Education Program for qualified inmates between 17 and 22; a tutorial program; and a number of life skills and vocational courses available to a relatively small number of inmates.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Navin Associates. (2000) *The Health-Related Needs of Inmates Exiting the Suffolk County House of Correction*, City of Boston, Boston Public Health Commission

**i) Fire/Police Protection**

As of 2000, there were 34 fire stations responding to a total of 77,573 incidents of which 1,867 were building fires. The Boston Fire Department responded to 36,734 medical/rescue calls in 2000. There were 11 police stations in 2000 responding to 599,133 emergency calls.<sup>82</sup>

**j) Unions**

Several union locals and the state office of the AFL-CIO provide adult education services in Boston and are potential allies with traditional adult education providers. Unions and union-related programs serving low-wage workers in Boston include:

- Greater Boston Hotel Employees SEIU Local 26, offering primarily ESOL classes;
- The Teamsters Local 25, offering ESOL classes to union members and community residents in partnership with El Centro;
- SEIU Local 416, represents janitors and works with some external adult ed providers;
- The AFL-CIO Education Program conducts workplace assessments involving both an educational needs analysis and an organizational analysis.

**k) Other Amenities**

Boston has an extensive parks and recreations system which in 2000 included: 2 golf courses, 26 swimming pools, 60 tennis courts, 4 major parks, 215 neighborhood & community parks, 192 neighborhood playgrounds, and 42 community recreation centers. A second and larger convention center is currently under construction in South Boston. Boston has many large and small hotels. It has a zoo, an aquarium, and a variety of museums.<sup>83</sup>

**l) Funding for AEL Services**

Forty-eight AEL providers, responding to a survey conducted for this report, provided information about their sources of funding. Nearly two-thirds of providers reported receiving funds from more than one funder. The most common source was the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), which funded 69% of responding providers. (Additional information on funding sources is provided in **FIGURE 17** in section D. 2.d below)

Most of the other sources of funding for Boston AEL providers are specific to Boston. Chief among these is the City of Boston, through the federally-funded Boston Connects serving the Boston Enterprise Zone, as well as the longstanding Office of Jobs and Community Services, and the relatively new Office for New Bostonians. The latter two joined with private philanthropic foundations, primarily the Hyams Foundation and The Boston Foundation, to create a new funding source known as English for New Bostonians,

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid

<sup>83</sup> Ibid

that is administered and partially funded by the Boston Adult Literacy Fund. Other Boston entities that fund AEL services in Boston include foundations such as the Boston Adult Literacy Fund, the Mabel Louise Riley Foundation, and corporations including State Street Bank, Fleet Bank, and John Hancock.

Boston AEL providers also have access to statewide funding sources. In addition to the DOE's Adult and Community Learning Services, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts also supports the Mass. Office for Refugees and Immigrants. Workplace education and displaced worker programs are funded by the quasi-public B.E.S.T. Initiative, CommCorp, and the Mass. Workforce Training Fund. In the private sector, Verizon has provided support to the Mass. Family Literacy Coalition and both Citizen and Fleet banks are interested in supporting literacy programs, financial literacy in Fleet's case.

Regional and national funders also are actual or potential assets to Boston AEL providers. In the public and/or quasi-public sector, these assets would include the Nellie Mae Foundation, special grants from the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Institute for Literacy, which provides information about many public and private sector funders. Some noteworthy private sector funders include the Barbara Bush Foundation, the Toyota Family Literacy Program, and AOL/Time Warner's Time to Read Program.

## **2) *ABE/ESOL/FAMILY LITERACY-RELATED SERVICES IN BOSTON***

Local AEL community coalitions inventoried the range of AEL services offered throughout the city. Surveys were received from every Department of Education (DOE)-funded provider in the city, as well as many non-DOE providers creating a relatively comprehensive listing of programs. In addition, each neighborhood coalition was asked to submit a detailed accounting of slot capacity, cost to students, vacancies, number of funded slots, types of classes offered, and more. Nevertheless, it is only possible to provide an estimate of the number of ABE/GED and ESOL slots, how they are funded, and what the cost is to students due to:

- Inconsistencies in the way that programs reported the number of their AEL slots and how they were funded. Some programs included all classes offered, while other programs distinguished between types of classes offered and whether they met the definition of Adult Education and Literacy.
- Program numbers that fluctuate as programs implement changes to their schedules and programs.

Each coalition was also asked to survey the ABE providers in their coalition regarding the zip codes of the place of residence of their adult learners. Data was provided by 38 providers on forty-three programs (some providers responded separately regarding more than one

program). Twenty-one percent of slots in Boston AEL programs are filled by individuals residing in cities and towns other than Boston.<sup>84</sup>

- The five zip codes from outside of Boston with the highest enrollment in Boston programs are: Malden 02148; North Quincy 02171; Quincy 02170; Quincy 02169; and Revere 02151.
- The top ten programs with the highest enrollment of students from cities and towns other than Boston are in the central Boston area and were reported by the Downtown Initiative for Adult Literacy (5), the Chinatown Community Educational Partnership (4), and the North End Adult Literacy Coalition (1).

What was learned from the information gathered provides a broad sense of AEL services in Boston. To learn more about the specifics of programming, costs, vacancies, and funding for each neighborhood, please refer to the neighborhood coalition reports.

Nearly every one of Boston's neighborhoods has at least one ABE/ESOL/Family Literacy-related program, with the exception of Mattapan. (see **FIGURE 14** for a listing of programs that submitted an Adult Education Services Template for this project which can be found in the individual coalition reports)

**FIGURE 14**

**Adult Education and Literacy Programs in Boston**

<i><b>Boston Neighborhood</b></i>	<i><b>Coalition</b></i>	<i><b>AEL Provider</b></i>
Allston / Brighton	Allston-Brighton Adult Education Coalition (ABAEC)	Allston Brighton CDC
		BEAM Project
		Boston College Neighborhood Center
		BPL – Allston Branch
		BPL – Brighton Branch
		BPL – Faneuil Branch
		Brazilian Immigration Center
		Commonwealth Tenants Association
		Crittenton Hastings House
		Gardner School
		Jackson/Mann Community Center
		Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly
		Joseph Smith Senior Center
		MA Alliance of Portuguese Speakers
		Oak Square YMCA

<sup>84</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Student Zip Code Analysis, Navin Associates, 9/1/02

<b><i>Boston Neighborhood</i></b>	<b><i>Coalition</i></b>	<b><i>AEL Provider</i></b>
		One with One
		The Literacy Connection
		Veronica Smith Senior Center
Charlestown	Charlestown Collaborative	Charlestown Community Center
Chinatown	Chinatown Community Education Partnership (CCEP)	Asian American Civic Association
		American Chinese Christian Educational and Social Services
		Chinese Progressive Association
		Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center
		Boston Chinese Evangelical Church
		Bunker Hill Community College
		Operation A.B.L.E.
Dorchester	Dorchester Adult Literacy Coalition (DALC)	Boston Center for Youth & Families, Perkins Community Center
		Boston Public Schools, Family Literacy Program
		FDNH Log School
		Haitian Multi Service Center
		Mother Caroline Academy
		Mujeres Unidas En Accion, Inc.
		ODWIN Learning Center
		Project Hope
		St. Mark's Area ESOL Program
		Vietnamese American Civic Association (VACA)
Downtown Boston	Downtown Initiative for Adult Literacy (DIAL)	ABCD LearningWorks
		Bridge Over Troubled Water
		Jewish Vocational Service
		Jobs For Youth
		International Institute of Boston
		Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts
		New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans VET-Tech
East Boston	East Boston Healthy Boston Coalition	EB Harborside Community School
Fenway	Fenway-Kenmore Community Partnership for Adult Learning (PALS)	Kenmore Abbey
		Fenway CDC
		Mission Main

<b><i>Boston Neighborhood</i></b>	<b><i>Coalition</i></b>	<b><i>AEL Provider</i></b>
		Morville House
		YMCA International Learning Center
		YMCA Adult Education
Hyde Park	Hyde Park Literacy Planning Group	Jewish Vocational Services
Jamaica Plain	Jamaica Plain / Egelston Square Family Support & Education Network	ESAC/GED Plus
		HOPE
		Hyde Square Task Force
		JP Comm. Centers, Adult Learning Project
		ABCD Jamaica Plain Headstart
North End	North End Coalition	ABCD North End ESOL Program
Roslindale	Roslindale Adult Literacy Community Planning Group	ABCD South Side Head Start ESOL
		BPL – Roslindale Branch
		High Point Village Community Center
		Roslindale Community Center
		St. Joseph Casserly House
		Sumner Community Language Center
Roxbury	Roxbury Adult Literacy Coalition (RALC)	Ambro Academy
		Boston Central Adult High School
		Dimock Community Health Center
		Hispanic Adult Education
		Immigrant Workers Resource Center
		La Alianza Hispana
		Learning English In Your Neighborhood
		Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation
		Project Hope
		Roxbury Community College – GED
		Roxbury Youthworks GED Plus Program
		SEIU Worker Education Program
		Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts
		Vine Street Community Center
		WAITT House
		Youthbuild Boston Charter School
South Boston	SB Coalition for Adult Ed. & Employment	Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Condon Community Center
		Mary Ellen McCormack Task Force
		Notre Dame Educational Center
		ABCD South Boston Action Center



South End	SE Adult Ed. Coalition (SEAEC)	American Red Cross
		Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Blackstone Community Center
		El Centro del Cardenal
		Pine Street Inn
		Project Place
		Salvation Army
		South End Adults at Cathedral
		The Home for Little Wanderers
		USES Harriet Tubman House
West Roxbury	Hyde Park Literacy Planning Group	Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Ohrenberger Community Center Jewish Vocational Service

Some of the programs have been in operation for less than a year, while others have been providing services for more than 25 years.<sup>85</sup> Citywide, female students occupy 70% of all AEL seats; with their actual representation in any given class ranging from 30-100%. The age of students served varied considerable from class to class. Nearly half of all students (48%) were 25-44 years old. The remaining students were distributed nearly equally between younger and older age groups.

Most programs reported serving students with a range of ethnicities including, but not limited to, Hispanic/Latino (27%), API (24%), and Black/African American (20%), White (12%). Programs serving Asian or Hispanic/Latino students were somewhat more likely to have ethnic concentrations of students.

There was a diversity of languages being spoken at home by adult learners according to the AEL programs responding to the survey. (see

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<sup>85</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Data Analysis Report: Aggregate Survey, Navin Associates, 2002

**FIGURE 15)** The languages most commonly spoken at home were Spanish, English, and Chinese. The category, speakers of “other” languages in the home (16%), included a rich mix of languages from all over the world.

**FIGURE 15**

**Language Spoken at Home by Adult Learners**

<i>Language</i>	<i>Average Percentage</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Percentage Range</i>
Spanish	28	31	0 – 100%
English	24	31	0 – 88
Chinese	22	38	0 – 100
Other	16		

An inventory of the offerings and programmatic frameworks of 48 AEL programs located in 14 neighborhoods found the following.

**a) Types of Classes**

ABE/GED/EDP/ADP, ESOL, and Technology Education courses were the most widely offered courses; Native Language Literacy, Family Literacy, and Homeless Education were among the courses least offered. (see

**FIGURE 16)** AEL programs offered a minimum of one and a maximum of 10 classes with the average number of offerings being 4 classes.

**FIGURE 16**

**Types of Classes Offered**  
**N=48**

<i>Types of Classes/Services Offered</i>	<i>Number of Programs Offering Classes</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
ESOL	34	71%
ABE &/or GED/EDP/ADP	28	58
Technology education	24	50
ABE	23	48
GED/EDP/ADP	22	46
Tutoring	20	42
Life skills	19	40
Citizenship	18	38
College transition	8	17
Health education	8	17
Native language literacy	5	10
Family literacy	4	8
Homeless education	4	8
Workplace literacy	3	6
Other	3	6

Source: Data Analysis Report: Aggregate Survey, Navin Associates, 2002

**b) Level of Services**

Please see individual neighborhood coalition reports for details about service levels, the wide variety of which could not be aggregated for reporting purposes.

**c) Service Schedule**

AEL courses are offered at a variety of times all week long. The majority of programs (79%) offered at least some courses in the morning. Evening classes followed with 52% of programs offering at least some courses at this time. Only 35% of programs offered courses in the afternoon. While 27% of programs offered at least some courses during the weekend, this amounted to 13 classes citywide. A majority of programs (71%) offered classes on weekdays.

**d) Slots**

There are approximately 6500 seats in AEL programs across the city. Funding for the operation of AEL programs comes from a variety of funding sources. The Massachusetts

Department of Education (DOE) is the single largest funder of AEL programs with 69% of programs receiving at least some funding from this source. The City of Boston provides funding to 52% of AEL programs in the city. Some 45% of programs received funding from both the DOE and the City of Boston. Slightly more than a third of the programs reported receiving funding from only one source, while 42% of programs received funding from three or four sources. (see FIGURE 17)

**FIGURE 17**

### Funding Sources and Number of Sources

<i><b>Funding Source</b></i>	<i><b># of Programs</b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
Massachusetts DOE	33	69
City of Boston	25	52
Boston Adult Literacy Fund	14	29
Private sources	23	48
Other sources	24	50
<i><b># of Funding Sources</b></i>	<i><b># of Programs</b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
1	17	35
2	8	17
3	10	21
4	10	21
5	3	6

#### **e) Slots Currently Available (vacant)**

There is high demand for the approximate 6,500 seats in AEL programs across the city and the wait for a vacant slot can be considerable. A survey conducted for this report found that the vast majority of classes report zero vacancies and any vacancies are filled quickly.<sup>86</sup> Classes with costs to students tend to have higher vacancies than classes which are free of charge.

A majority of programs (88%) use a wait list to fill vacant slots in classes. Prospective students generally wait a minimum of one and a maximum of 24 months in any given program, unless the program has a closed referral contract with its funding source that requires immediate admission. Although 35% of program wait lists result in students waiting less than 6 months, 25% of programs report the average wait right at 6 months. Fewer than 12% of programs had students on wait lists for an average of 12 months or more. The size of the wait lists varied significantly across programs from a minimum of four to a maximum of 500. Forty-eight percent of programs had average wait list sizes of

<sup>86</sup> Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Data Analysis Report: Aggregate Program Information Survey, Navin Associates, 2002

99 people or less. Another 21% of programs had average wait list sizes of 200 or more people. There were seven programs (15%) with wait lists exceeding 301 individuals. (see **FIGURE 18**)

An interesting finding emerged during a discussion of these data among DOE-funded providers. The common wisdom had been that ESOL wait lists were uniformly longer than ABE/GED wait lists. The discussion revealed, however, that five of the twelve DOE-funded providers present, who offered both ESOL and ABE/GED programs, had current wait lists for their ABE/GED programs that approximated or were longer than the wait lists for their ESOL programs. A brief discussion of the possible reasons for this surprising fact was inconclusive but, included consideration of the following factors.

- ESOL students, who often are already literate and are learning only English, tend to move out of ESOL programs at a quicker rate than low level ABE students. Consequently, ABE slots tend to open up less frequently than ESOL slots.
- ESOL class cycles tend to be shorter because of the need to go to work sooner.
- More ESOL slots have been created in the last few years than ABE/GED slots, due to the English for New Bostonians Initiative and the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians.

**FIGURE 18**

**Average number of students on wait list**

<i>Average number of students on wait list</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1 – 25	12 programs	25%
26 – 50	4	8
51 – 99	7	15
100 – 199	9	19
200 – 300	3	6
301+	7	15

**f) Cost (if any)**

The vast majority of AEL classes are free of cost to students. Among those that are not free, there is considerable variation from program to program in the cost structure. Course sessions usually run by the semester or in three month intervals and are priced up to \$360 when a fee is charged. One neighborhood offers advanced accounting, computer, and office skills courses with associated costs of up to \$5,000.

**g) Capacity to Serve People on an ABE-GED Track**

There is a citywide capacity to serve approximately 1,800 individuals on an ABE-GED track, based on a survey conducted for this report. There was some variation in this figure based on how programs classified and reported the classes they offered. In some cases programs departed from the definition of AEL classes to add relevant types of offerings to their count e.g., citizenship, and computer literacy. In other cases programs under-counted slots that might otherwise have been included e.g., homeless/ABE. Finally, the survey followed DOE's use of "slots" as a unit of measurement, however, some non-DOE-funded programs were not familiar with that term. What is known, however, is that demand exceeds capacity.

**h) Capacity to Serve People Who Need ESOL**

Citywide capacity to serve people who need ESOL is approximately 4,700. Like ABE-GED capacity, this figure is inexact and demand exceeds capacity.

**3) SERVICE PROVIDERS (POTENTIALLY) USED BY ADULT LEARNERS**

Boston has an extensive service providers network which includes public and private sector agencies and organizations. Better collaboration and linkages among these agencies/organizations and AEL service providers would make these resources all the more available to adult learners. For a comprehensive listing of citywide services in the areas of education, health, human services, special needs, protective services, shelters & food pantries, child care, housing assistance, and elderly refer to Connections: A Guide to Health and Human Service Providers and Advocates in Greater Boston in the **Appendices**. Published by Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. and the Boston Public Health Commission in the Summer of 2001, it is a comprehensive guide to services in the city of Boston that can be accessed at [BostonResourceNet.org](http://BostonResourceNet.org).

**4) EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

In the year 2000<sup>87</sup>, 583,100 individuals were employed in the city of Boston<sup>88</sup>. The entire population of the City of Boston, including children and elders, exceeded the number of individuals working in the city by only about 6,000, signifying that a sizeable portion of the City's labor force resided outside of the city limits. Likewise, it is presumed that many

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<sup>87</sup> The year 2000 is the most recent year for which data on employment opportunities was available. Many significant changes to the economy have occurred since 2000, most notably the generally weakening of the economy prior to the events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent crisis to the economy following those events.

<sup>88</sup> Boston Facts & Figures: A Statistical Perspective on Boston's Government and its Population, 2002 Edition, Boston Municipal Research Bureau, Inc.



residents of Boston work outside of the city. Employment in the Boston Metropolitan area, including the city proper, was 2,000,536. **FIGURE 19** presents an excerpted list of the major industry divisions and the percentage of employment in these areas for the city of Boston, adapted from the Boston Municipal Research Bureau, Inc.:

**FIGURE 19**

**Major Industry Divisions for the City of Boston**

<b>MAJOR INDUSTRY DIVISION</b>	<b>% OF 2000 EMPLOYMENT</b>
Government	14.9%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining	.2%
Contract Construction	2.6%
Manufacturing	4.6%
Transportation, Communications, Utilities	5.9%
Wholesale & Retail	13.1%
Finance, Insurance Real Estate	15.1%
Banking/Financial Investment	10.4%
Insurance	3.0%
Real Estate	1.7%
Services (Health, Educational, Other)	43.6%
Health Services	13.1%
Educational Services	4.5%
Other Services	26.0%

The largest concentration of jobs in the city of Boston was in the service sector at 43.6%. The finance, insurance, and real estate sector provided the next highest concentration of jobs at 15.1%. Government (14.9%) and wholesale & retail trade (13.1%) followed closely behind. Only 0.2% of jobs are in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and mining. The numbers differ somewhat for the Boston Metropolitan Area, with fewer employed in the government, service, and the banking/finance sectors and with more in wholesale & retail and manufacturing. See the **Appendices** for a more complete breakdown on trends and employment statistics by industry from 1995 to 2000.

There were 36 private employers of 1,000 employees or more in the city of Boston as of July 2000.<sup>89</sup> Massachusetts General Hospital was the single largest employer with 14,907 employees, followed by Fidelity Investments (FMR Corporation) with 11,250. One-third of the largest employers were health care facilities followed closely by financial institutions (30.5%). Eleven percent of the largest employers were universities and colleges. Other large employers were airlines, supermarkets, WGBH, Gillette Company, Filene's, and NSTAR. For

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

a complete listing of the city's top 36 employers broken down by full-time and part-time employees, see **Appendices**.

## **5) EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS AND INTERAGENCY COLLABORATIONS**

There are many existing and evolving partnerships and interagency collaborations in the City of Boston. Many of them are organized directly around the issues of education, while others are focused indirectly or not at all on issues of education. The following is not an exhaustive list of existing partnerships and interagency collaborations:

- Adult Literacy Initiative
- After School for All
- Alliance for Teen Pregnancy
- Alternative Education Alliance
- BEST Youth Worker Training
- Black Ministerial Alliance
- Boston Adult Literacy Fund
- Boston Connects
- Cape Verdean Task Force
- Challenge 2006: The Boston Coalition
- Child/Adolescent Mental Health Coalition (BPHC)
- Chinatown Coalition
- Community Learning Centers (30+ around city)
- Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries (urban suburban partnerships)
- Community Policing, BPD
- DSS Community Coalitions (Allston Brighton Coalition, Dorchester CARES, and JP Tree of Life)
- Father's First
- Finding the Time (collaboration between city and community agencies around improving communication between parents and teens)
- Girl's Coalition
- GBIO (Greater Boston Interfaith Organization)
- Healthy Boston Communities (Allston Brighton, East Boston, Franklin Hill/Franklin Field, JP Tree of Life, Roslindale)
- Job Training Alliance
- Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education
- Massachusetts Workforce Alliance
- PIC: Work Force Investment Board
- Project RIGHT
- Read Boston
- SafeFutures Initiative

- Safe Neighborhoods Initiative
- South Boston Collaborative
- Teen Challenge Fund (Teen pregnancy Prevention fund out of NE Home for Little Wanderers)
- 10 Point Coalition
- Zero to Eight Coalition

## **E. IMPLICATIONS/CONCLUSIONS**

### ***1) KEY FINDINGS***

- ***Demand for AEL services far exceeds the availability of AEL services.*** Approximately 88% of the 48 AEL programs surveyed for this report stated that they use a wait list and that the list varies from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 500 individuals. While some students wait up to two years for a placement in an AEL class, 60% are placed in 6 months or less. Waits of up to 6 months may be insurmountably long to someone needing to learn the basic English necessary to navigate through the day to day of ones life - - employment search, housing, negotiating with a child's school, updating one's immigration papers, and meeting health care needs.
- ***Boston is a city with a large and growing immigrant and Minority community.*** In 2000, more than one in four Bostonians were foreign born, up from one in five in 1990.. Almost half of all foreign-born came from Latin America. A quarter were Asian-born. Latino residents have increased in all but three neighborhoods and Asians in all but one..
- ***A third of Boston residents speak a language other than English in the home.*** Many of these individuals speak English "less than very well", by self report. Not being able to speak English well is often an impediment to career advancement and academic achievement. Parents who are not able to speak English are less able to provide the support their children need to succeed in school, putting their child at greater risk of underachieving.
- ***Many Bostonians lack the credentials to succeed in the "new economy".*** One in five Bostonians over 25 does not have a high school diploma and, of these, many left school without completing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. There is unmet need for credentialing programs among this population
- ***Many Bostonians lack the skills to succeed in the "new economy" despite credentials.*** A recent study by MassINC. found that 35% of individuals statewide lack the credentials to succeed in the new economy. There is a significant need for workers to improve and/or obtain new skills despite their credentials. The skills needed by individuals to advance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy are rapidly changing and complex. Further education (e.g., computer skills, technical training) and help these individuals achieve better career advancement.
- ***There are a significant number of Boston households earning near or below the poverty level.*** These households are at additional risk of hunger, homelessness, and inadequate housing and are in need of special services. Children of parents who are living in poverty are at greater risk of underachieving in school.

- ***While overall income has increased since 1990, real earnings are down for less educated workers.*** Less educated workers are less able to compete in an increasingly knowledge-based economy. After controlling for inflation, less educated workers actually saw their wages decline during the 1990s, according to a recently released report by Acting Governor Swift.
- ***Unemployment is on the rise.*** Beginning in 2001, the unemployment rate began to rise again, after nearly a decade long drop. The economy, which began to perform poorly prior to the events of September 11, 2001, continues to perform poorly. State revenue is down considerably and cuts to most programs have been steep and probably will get worse before the economy recovers.
- ***State funding for AEL services has been cut 7% in the past year and may be cut again, given a projected state budget deficit of more than \$2,000,000,000.00.***
- ***Economic conditions pose serious challenges to many Bostonians.*** Credentialing and further education would help Bostonians cope with these challenging circumstances. The Boston consolidated metropolitan statistical area (CMSA) has the highest consumer price index among major U.S. CMSAs for “All items”, which includes food, housing, apparel, transportation, medical care, entertainment, and fuel and other utilities.
- ***Housing costs have skyrocketed for both home purchase and rental property.*** Every neighborhood, except Hyde Park, experienced a doubling or tripling of median sales prices from 1990 to 2000. Advertised asking rent also increased significantly, although rent as a percentage of household income went down for most households from 1990 to 2000. Despite the overall decreases in the rent to income ratio, nearly a third of households spent 35% or more of their monthly income on rent. Other expenses that add to the monthly burden for families are the increasing costs of heating fuel and other utilities.
- ***There is a shortage of safe, affordable, and available child care in Boston for parents of young children.*** Parents and guardians of pre-school and school-aged children are hindered from pursuing AEL opportunities due to a lack of safe and affordable child care.
- ***AEL services are not offered as often or when many students would like them.*** Scheduling conflicts presented a significant challenge to students in two ways. The first was finding the time in already busy work and family schedules. The second was that the demand for weekend and evening classes exceeded the availability of classes at these times. More classes are needed at all times, especially in the evenings and weekends.
- ***Twenty-one percent of slots in Boston AEL programs are filled by individuals residing in cities and towns other than Boston, according to AEL providers surveyed for this report.*** Only 35% of adult learners in Boston attend classes in their own

Boston neighborhood; 45% live in Boston and attend classes in another Boston neighborhood. One in five adult learners in Boston lives outside Boston.

- ***Pursuing and succeeding in AEL courses is influenced by interrelated personal issues which get in the way of student success (money, family responsibilities, transportation, child care, native language literacy, every day life demands).*** Many adult learners are often at the lower end of the economic spectrum, working at more physically demanding jobs with long hours or variable schedules and with little scheduling flexibility. Others are hampered by poor English and/or native language literacy skills.
- ***More coordination and collaboration are needed to improve AEL services according to adult learners, potential students, day care parents, employers, literacy providers, human service providers, and other stakeholders surveyed for this report.***
  - Better coordinated and more strategic outreach and marketing would more widely inform potential students and providers about available services.
  - Stronger collaborations and linkages between the business community, AEL providers, and community resources could bolster and maximize limited existing resources.
  - Coordination and collaboration would facilitate the improvement of adult education services (more funding and more resources).
- ***AEL services need to be expanded to include more course offerings generally and more bridge classes specifically.*** More courses in pre-literacy, financial literacy, native literacy, and in other languages (especially Spanish) would be beneficial to students.
- ***The ultimate impact on AEL of using the MCAS as a mandatory graduation requirement is as yet unknown, but AEL providers anticipate that it will increase demand and affect class composition.***

## 2) SPECIFIC POPULATION NEEDS

It is no surprise that there are many AEL-related needs of specific populations in the city of Boston given that the city is in the midst of reinventing itself economically and demographically. Some specific population needs are unique to particular neighborhoods while others are experienced citywide.

- ***People who cannot speak English and individuals who lack adequate proficiency in English share many AEL-related needs and are present in every neighborhood in the city.*** ESOL classes at all levels are fundamental to all subsequent academic and career advancement. Proficiency in English opens up otherwise unavailable career opportunities. It is the stepping stone to earning a GED or EDP and getting on a career path that will provide long-term economic stability. Proficiency in English is what is

minimally necessary for many immigrants with advanced training in their countries of origin to potentially resume those careers in this country.

- ***The AEL-related needs of Boston's immigrant population are, at times, as diverse as the populations themselves and addressing the needs requires hand-tailored solutions.***
  - Immigrants from certain countries are more likely to be well-educated, while immigrants from others are more likely to be less educated. The AEL needs will differ accordingly.
  - Immigrants from countries with cultures that have more in common with U.S. culture may have different needs than immigrants from countries with less in common with the U.S. For instance, immigrants from countries with more similar alphabets and root languages and more exposure to U.S. popular culture and cuisine may face fewer obstacles to adapting to their new home. Others (like the Vietnamese community in Dorchester) may need additional support services to facilitate connecting to larger mainstream society, including the Boston Public Schools.
  - Gender differences and constraints may also vary from country to country for immigrants. For instance, one Chinese focus group participant said "In the Chinese family, the men work in the restaurants: the women learn English".
  - Significant differences among learners about their perceptions about learning emerged in many neighborhoods.
- ***Residents of public housing in many neighborhoods in the city are in need of AEL services and, yet, are particularly difficult to recruit into AEL programs according to providers of AEL services.***
  - Interrelated issues of poverty and a low educational attainment for many residents of public housing are significant obstacles to entering and advancing in the work force.
  - Given the significant gains that could be made by residents of public housing through utilizing AEL services, more effective recruitment and better support of the students is indicated.
- ***Low-income, single mothers have a myriad of AEL-related needs with transportation and child care being the most concrete and easily identifiable among the many.*** Additional support to low-income mothers to boost self-esteem and to coordinate multiple social service needs would improve the likelihood of success in AEL-pursuits.
- ***Younger adult learners (under 25 years old) have introduced new challenges into the classroom as their presence in the classroom increases.*** Younger learners often don't demonstrate the same commitment to learning or seriousness as slightly older learners. There is a need to develop more effective ways to manage the sometimes conflicting agendas of older and younger learners.

- ***There are multigenerational issues affecting families in need of family literacy initiatives.*** The whole family faces obstacles to academic achievement according to a recently released report by MassInc.
  - “Children with below average skills entering kindergarten tend to have: a mother with less than a high school education; a family that received food stamps or cash welfare payments; a single parent as head of household; and/or parents with a primary language other than English”.
- ***Low wage workers need stronger supports to facilitate class enrollment and attendance and to help with persistence and retention.***
  - Class schedules and tutoring are needed to complement the work schedules of workers in particular industrial groups, e.g., hotel workers, janitors, food service workers, and hospital workers.
  - Advocacy with Boston employers to encourage them to provide workplace education programs (as is more common in other parts of the state) as well as on scheduling-related issues is needed.
- ***Homeless individuals have particularly complex needs for an array of comprehensive services, including AEL services.***
- ***People with and without a credential, but without sufficient skills to succeed in this economy have multiple AEL-related needs.***
  - The “new economy” is increasingly knowledge-based, leaving many who lack rapidly changing and more complex skills behind in low paying jobs.
  - Many students who graduate from Boston Public Schools need additional academic and/or skills training in order to earn a living wage.
- ***Mattapan has the eighth highest enrollment by zip code within the city in AEL classes, but there are no DOE-funded classes within Mattapan.*** Residents of this neighborhood may benefit from being able to attend AEL classes nearer to home.

### 3) GAPS IN SERVICES

- ***More classes of all kinds are needed throughout the city***
  - More ESOL classes are needed at all levels. Demand for ESOL at all levels significantly exceeds slots for classes across the city.
  - More ABE/GED/Pre-GED/ADP, EDP slots are needed with roughly 5 out of 12 such programs maintaining waitlists as long as or longer than ESOL waitlists.
  - More “bridge” or transitional services from ESOL to AEL are needed.
  - More course offerings are in demand (computer skills training, citizenship classes, job readiness/training, native language literacy classes).



- ***There are significant gaps in AEL schedules across the city.*** More classes are needed at all times, in the afternoons and evenings and on the weekends.
- ***Affordable and safe child care is in short supply.*** Parents cannot attend classes when there are gaps in child care coverage.
- ***More comprehensive student support (tutoring, translation, self-esteem building) is needed to help many students succeed.*** A wide range of basic and coordinated support services are necessary for student success, but are inadequately provided currently.
- ***There are gaps in support services for immigrants.***
  - Immigrants need more support around citizenship and immigration issues, including managing day-to-day issues and connecting to mainstream society.
  - Translation services are needed

#### 4) ***BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES***

- ***Long waitlists***

Securing a slot in a class is perhaps the most pressing and obvious barrier to involvement with AEL services.
- ***Competing class/work schedules***

Many prospective and current students are already stretched by working one or more low wage jobs; frequently their schedules or shifts change with little or no warning. Sustaining attendance is difficult under such circumstances. Complicating this is the fact that not enough classes are offered when students might be able to attend (afternoons, evenings, weekends).
- ***Child care and other family responsibilities***

Finding safe and affordable child care is an obstacle to attendance, especially for mothers of children under 5. Adult learners generally are working full-time, often with a second job, and have many other family responsibilities which interfere with attending class and doing homework. This is particularly true for families with low income.
- ***Transportation***

Transportation, a general difficulty, is compounded when work, home, and class are all in different parts of the city.
- ***Learning disabilities***

Diagnosed and undiagnosed learning disabilities pose a significant barrier to success. The AEL system is not able to respond effectively, due to a lack of resources, training, and research.

- **Poverty**  
Poverty and the effects of poverty present a significant barrier to participating in AEL services.
- **Health Issues**  
Health issues (including physical and mental health and substance abuse) present significant barriers to participating in and completing AEL classes.
- **Homelessness**  
Homelessness and related issues pose significant barriers to participating in and completing AEL classes.
- **Institutional/Systemic Barriers**  
Systemic barriers to long-term success of adult education students are the state and federal emphasis on “Work First” and short-term training, and the Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund’s lack of support for long-term ESOL & ABE for incumbent workers.
- **Stigma of Illiteracy**  
Some potential students are deterred from enrolling in class because of the stigma associated with being perceived as illiterate.
- **Program Resources**  
AEL programs are, in general, under funded. This often impacts the quality of the programs (lack of materials, sub-optimal learning conditions, teacher turnover, and lack of infrastructure/support to run high quality programs). These conditions can act as a barrier to successful participation in programs.
- **Insufficient Information Available About AEL services**  
Very little marketing and outreach is done to raise awareness about the availability of AEL services so many individuals, employers and agencies are unaware that they exist. (one dilemma about doing more outreach is that waiting lists are already long).
- **Lack of employer awareness**  
Few employers consider employees’ involvement in adult education classes as something to support. Neither do employers offer AEL services to their own employees.

## 5) IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE PLANNING (& SPECIAL CHALLENGES)

- ***The economic and educational profile of many Bostonians indicates an even greater need for AEL services than the current excess demand portrays.***
- ***The gap between the wealthy and the poor will continue to grow if the complex skills necessary to advance in the “new economy” are not made more available to the under-educated and under-trained.***
- ***A stronger financial base is needed to address the gaps in AEL services.***
  - Survey available funding resource assets identified in this report to determine current and foreseeable funding levels.
  - Work with employers and unions to increase awareness and resources.
  - Advocate for and identify new public revenue streams.
  - Leverage community resources through collaboration and partnerships with other groups and agencies (including use of space).
- ***The rapidly growing number of immigrants has already had a profound impact on AEL services and will continue to be a significant factor in future AEL planning.***
  - A special immigrant-related challenge is that this is a population that is notoriously undercounted in census data, making it hard to accurately assess needs and plan accordingly.
  - As the countries of origin of adult learners become more varied, AEL providers are challenged to learn about new populations, including their cultural characteristics and the circumstances of their emigration.
- ***Inherent limitations in the collection of census tract data can mislead AEL program planners.*** For instance, some individuals might be recorded as “Black”, when they are immigrants from Cape Verde. Immigrant Cape Verdeans might have different AEL needs than African Americans who are native born, such as language skills versus credentials. On the other hand, some immigrants might only need ESOL and not other ABE-related services because they were well-educated in their countries of origin. Either way, census tract data should inform, but not dictate, AEL program planning.
- ***Increased numbers of offenders being released should lead to coordination (e.g., referrals) between AEL services in correctional institutions and those in the neighborhoods to which the ex-offenders return.***
- ***A more integrated network of support and AEL services might help to address the complex needs of many AEL students.***
- ***Further investigation of the reasons programs do not use supported distance learning methods to reach wait list students would be helpful in learning about barriers in this area.***

- ***Workplace AEL services would help to address the need for additional AEL services and might alleviate the burden of juggling multiple responsibilities for some learners.***
- ***Strategic planning of services should not be based solely on the assumption that where people live is the major determinant of where they receive AEL services,*** except perhaps in geographically isolated neighborhoods such as East Boston and Charlestown. Proximity to work and services, program waitlists, lack of desired classes, lack of knowledge about programs near home, fear of being stigmatized by neighbors, and transportation resources and patterns may be more important than where people live in determining which program to attend.
- ***Future planning and improving of AEL services would be better facilitated by more consistent and regular collection of a minimal set of data across all programs - - DOE and non-DOE funded alike.*** For instance, reasonable questions that might be regularly asked at agreed upon intervals of all sites would be about types and levels of classes offered and capacity and vacancy in these classes. This would require no additional information from DOE-funded programs.
- ***AEL providers must take into account changes in education and workforce development that are likely to impact program planning.*** Some examples of changes include the Unz Initiative, changes in high school graduation requirements, deficits in state and federal budgets, and the trend toward outcome assessment among private sector funders.
- ***One challenge to AEL community planning is the lack of an exhaustive list of AEL programs or slots.*** This community planning process provided most of that information but, so far, it is not possible to know about every faith-based or employer sponsored class.
- ***The following is a list of suggestions for local AEL coalitions regarding next steps in community planning as a result of the community assessment process.***
  - Begin with reflection on a difficult job well done and what the community assessment process revealed about the strengths and weaknesses of AEL-related assumptions, beliefs and practices.
  - Present and share the results of the comprehensive citywide and neighborhood reports with stakeholders, keeping the broader context of inter-neighborhood similarities in mind.
  - Start the strategic planning process as soon as possible using the comprehensive assessment to guide the process.
  - Expand coalition membership to non-traditional members (e.g., businesses, unions, press and legislators) and ensure all AEL providers are involved. Find "common" language and innovative ways of looking of addressing the challenges. Be open to "new ways" of compromise and presenting services,

- e.g. swapping for resources or space, etc. Keep the urgent need to provide resources to the clients/students a priority.
- Look for and take advantage of opportunities to present and share "best or emerging practices."

## **F. APPENDICES**

### ***I. SECONDARY DATA REPORT***

- Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Secondary Data Review: Boston, Navin Associates, 12/02

### ***II. REPORT ON EXISTING ABE/ESOL/FAMILY LITERACY SERVICES***

- Boston's Guide to Opportunities 2002-2003: Training, Education and Human Service Programs, Office of Jobs and Community Services
- CONNECTIONS: A Guide to Health and Human Service Providers and Advocates in Greater Boston

### ***III. PRIMARY DATA REPORT***

- Citywide Primary Data Report

### ***IV. CITYWIDE RESEARCH TOOLS***

- Adult Education Services Template
- Aggregate Program Information Survey
- Adult Education Staff Survey
- Zip Code Survey

### ***V. RESEARCH ANALYSIS***

- Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Focus Group Analysis, Navin Associates, 9/02.
- Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Key Informant Interviews Analysis, Navin Associates, 9/02.
- Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Student Zip Code Analysis, Navin Associates, 9/02
- Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Surveys, Summary of Needs and Barriers by Neighborhoods and Respondents, Navin Associates, 10/02
- Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Surveys: Citywide Overview, Navin Associates, 10/02
- Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Summary of 14 Boston Neighborhood Comprehensive Community Assessment Reports, Navin Associates, 12/02
- Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Data Analysis Report: Aggregate Program Information Survey, Navin Associates, 12/02
- Boston ABE Community Planning Project, Data Analysis Report: Staff Survey, Navin Associates, 12/02

### ***VI. MAP***

**VII. NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED AEL COMMUNITY COALITION REPORTS**

**Allston-Brighton Adult Education Coalition**

**Charlestown Collaborative**

**Chinatown Community Educational Partnership**

**Dorchester Adult Literacy Coalition**

**Downtown Initiative for Adult Literacy**

**East Boston Healthy Boston Coalition**

**Fenway / Kenmore Community Partnership**

**Hyde Park Adult Literacy Planning Group**

**Jamaica Plain / Egelston Square Education Network**

**North End Adult Literacy Coalition**

**Roslindale Adult Literacy Community Planning Group**

**Roxbury Adult Literacy Coalition**

**South Boston Adult Literacy and Education Coalition**

**South End Adult Education Coalition**

**VIII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES/INFORMATION**

- Boston Globe Opinion Editorial
- Boston Facts & Figures: A Statistical Perspective on Boston's Government and its Population, 2002 Edition, Boston Municipal Research Bureau, Inc.